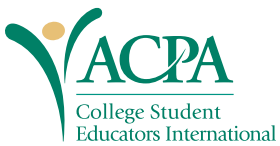
Professional Competency Areas for Student Affairs Practitioners

A JOINT PUBLICATION



endorsed by each association's board of directors on July 24, 2010

CONTENTS

Membership of Joint Task Force 1

Introduction 3

Competency Areas:

Advising and Helping 6

Assessment, Evaluation, and Research 8

Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion 10

Ethical Professional Practice 12

History, Philosophy, and Values 14

Human and Organizational Resources 16

Law, Policy, and Governance 20

Leadership 22

Personal Foundations 24

Student Learning and Development 28

Appendix 30

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Professional Competency Areas for Student Affairs Practitioners

Purpose

This set of Professional Competency Areas is intended to define the broad professional knowledge, skills, and, in some cases, attitudes expected of student affairs professionals regardless of their area of specialization or positional role within the field. All student affairs professionals should be able to demonstrate their ability to meet the basic list of outcomes under each competency area regardless of how they entered the profession. Thus, this document is intended to inform the design of professional development opportunities for student affairs professionals by providing outcomes that can be incorporated into the design of specific curriculum and training opportunities. Additionally, if student affairs professionals desire to grow in a particular competency area, they can examine expected learning and skills in the intermediate and advanced levels. Such examination allows individual practitioners to use this document to help guide their own choices about professional development opportunities afforded to them. In this document, the terms "practitioner" and "professional" are used interchangeably. We expect that the contents of this document will evolve in accordance with the needs of the profession and those whom the profession serves.

Process

In the summer of 2009, ACPA – College Student Educators International (ACPA) and NASPA – Student Affairs Administrators in Higher Education (NASPA), the two largest comprehensive student affairs professional associations in the United States, committed to work together to establish one set of professional competency areas that both associations would endorse for the broad field of student affairs. ACPA and NASPA created the Joint Task Force on Professional Competencies and Standards to develop a set of competency areas and outcomes and present it to each association's governing bodies for approval. Members of the joint task force were selected by these two associations because of their work with each professional association; however, members were asked to engage in the conversation not as representatives of their respective nominating association, but as members of the broader student affairs professional community. Members of the joint task force were charged with drafting a document that articulated common professional competency areas applicable to all student affairs professionals in the United States, regardless of their specific area of emphasis within the field. Their work is contained within this document.

The work of this joint task force included the investigation of current literature and research pertaining to professional competencies, standards, and expectations of student affairs professionals. While past research and publications informed the conversations of the task force, the task force members also discussed the competency areas that would be needed for the future of the profession. The task force also reviewed a report by Weiner, Bresciani, Hickmott, and Felix (under review) based upon an analysis of 19 separate documents, including reports, proposals, and professional development curriculum that were sanctioned by the boards of NASPA, ACPA, and the Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education (CAS). CAS is comprised of representatives from nearly 40 student affairs associations in the United States and Canada. A full listing of these documents is included in the Appendix. As part of this report, the researchers also conducted an extensive literature review and connected the literature to the competency areas that emerged from the document analysis. From this extensive literature review and document analysis, the researchers developed a set of eight learning goals that were based upon the themes that emerged.

In October 2009, the joint task force held an initial conference call to consider the document analysis report (Weiner et al., under review) and develop a project plan. The task force then met in person in December 2009 with the goals of establishing a draft list of competency areas and assigning responsibility to members to develop the content corresponding to each area. Working from the document analysis report, additional existing literature, and other professional association documents, the task force agreed upon a final set of 10 competency areas that are identified in this document. Task force members worked in pairs to develop the content for each competency area, which was then reviewed and revised by the task force at large. While most of the content in this document was created by members of this joint task force, some content within certain competency areas was adapted from existing ACPA or NASPA materials.

The draft list of professional competency areas was made available to leadership and membership review and comment during the 2010 annual conference or convention of each association. Members were also encouraged to submit comments to an online blog site. The joint task force document was refined based on the feedback from membership and was forwarded to the respective association governing boards for endorsement at their July 2010 joint meeting. Each association board endorsed this document for immediate implementation on July 24, 2010.

Intended Audiences

The intended audience for this document is student affairs professionals practicing in the United States. To the degree to which these competencies are applicable for international colleagues, we welcome their adaptation and utilization. These competencies are intended to inform the professional development agenda of all practitioners whose work pertains primarily to the development of college students, regardless of one's institutional mission, organizational structure, or specific functional role within which one works. The joint task force recognizes that the field of student affairs is extremely broad and ever-changing; therefore, each individual is invited to determine whether these competency areas directly relate to one's existing professional community or the community one intends to join. More explicitly, some who work in a student affairs division may determine that these competency areas do not adequately describe their communities of practice, while some who work in other divisions within an institution may find that these competency areas are appropriate for their professional responsibilities. This is for each individual to determine and might best be done in consultation with one's supervisor.

Organizational leaders may find it useful to determine who within the organization would benefit from analyzing their own professional knowledge, skills, and attitudes in light of these defined competency areas in order to create a plan to address their professional development goals, taking into account the mission and organizational structure of their institution or division. It should be emphasized that student affairs practice is conducted within the context of specific institutions, and as a result, the expectations of certain institutions may differ from those at other campuses. This document may also be useful to supervisors in creating job descriptions or in evaluating the performance of colleagues. The joint task force acknowledges that most, but not all, who currently enter the student affairs profession have received a graduate degree in a closely related field of study. Regardless of one's formal educational background, this document may be helpful in determining what additional education or training supervisees may need to be successful in their positions.

Finally, graduate student affairs program faculty may choose to use this document to develop or refine their curriculum to better address the competencies expected of practitioners in the field. The joint task force does recognize, however, that each knowledge, skill, and attitude mentioned in the competency areas cannot, and perhaps should not, be addressed in a typical graduate program. This document may also be a useful tool in creating tailored internship experiences or in advising graduating students about additional education or training opportunities that might be needed in a new position for which they have been hired. Finally, this document may help inform those supervising graduates of professional preparation programs as they prepare a supportive learning environment where graduates transition to their first full-time professional role and design their professional development plans.

Competency Area Levels

Each competency area begins with a general definition, followed by a listing of knowledge, skills, or attitudes that student affairs practitioners are expected to demonstrate. These lists are divided into basic, intermediate, and advanced levels that delineate the increasing complexity and ability that should be demonstrated by practitioners as they grow in their professional development. These levels should not be confused with one's years of service in the field, nor with one's current positional role or title. Rather, the levels of basic, intermediate, and advanced correspond only to the knowledge, skills, and attitudes that one can demonstrate to others at a given point in time. In other words, student affairs professionals would not be expected to hold an intermediate or advanced level of skills in all areas. Moreover, for some professionals, due to the type of work in which they engage, it may be advantageous for them to advance their knowledge and skills in certain competency areas, while still holding a basic level of knowledge and skill in other competency areas. However, all student affairs professionals should be able to hold the basic level of knowledge and skills in all competency areas.

Those who demonstrate an intermediate or advanced level of competency in a given area are presumed to also be able to demonstrate the knowledge, skills, and attitudes of the level(s) below their current level of attainment. Individuals are encouraged to consider the overall spirit and intention conveyed within each level when determining the level at which they are currently achieving, rather than simply using this document as a

"check-off list" of professional accomplishments. Finally, this document does not serve to inform professionals about how they can transition to the next level; that is the work of those who will design future professional development curricula that intends to address the varying levels of each competency area.

Competency Area Threads

In the course of determining the competency areas, the joint task force identified a number of "threads" that are woven into most of the competency areas. The joint task force, based on feedback from members, determined that these topics were best represented as components of the expected knowledge, skills, and attitudes described within each competency area, rather than as separate competency areas themselves. In other words, these threads are considered essential elements of each competency area and therefore should be incorporated into the professional development design of each competency area, rather than exist as competency areas themselves.

The identified threads are:

- Technology: the appropriate identification and use of technology resources in one's work
- Sustainability: a balanced focus on the interrelated priorities of economic strength, social justice, and environmental health
- Globalism: the recognition of the interconnected nature of nations and regions of the world while understanding and respecting the uniqueness of each cultural context

The Connection With the Council for the Advancement of Standards

These ACPA and NASPA competency areas, and the work of the Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education (CAS), provide support for quality assurance in student affairs practice. Standards of practice are generated in student affairs by CAS. CAS is comprised of the directors and alternative directors from nearly 40 member associations who approve each standard through a consensus model. Each CAS standard is comprised of 14 components, several of which address competencies required or suggested for professionals in each functional area (e.g., leadership, residence life, assessment, student activities). In addition, CAS has a statement on characteristics of individual excellence designed for professional self-assessment. These ACPA and NASPA competency areas will inform CAS in the next revision of the 14 general standards in 2012. CAS joined with ACPA and NASPA in this collaborative effort to advance quality professional practice in student affairs work.

Examples of Usage

ACPA and NASPA plan to provide a Professional Competency Areas resource page on their associational websites where members will be able to obtain additional resources and share ideas about how they are using these competency areas on their campuses. In the process of creating this document, task force members heard many excellent ideas from members about ways they intend to use these competency areas, such as to:

- Draft position descriptions
- Support career counselors in guiding students into the profession
- Design professional development opportunities for individuals and groups (by examining individual self-assessments and themes that arise from multiple self-assessments)
- Design electronic portfolios to showcase professional accomplishments that align with each competency area
- Collaborate with Human Resources to develop professional development opportunities that may apply across divisions
- Provide an agenda or framework for mentoring relationships
- Assist in educating other campus constituents about the work of student affairs
- Develop a curriculum for a staff retreat or for professional development throughout the year
- Demonstrate a need for resources
- Provide justification for professional development expenses by connecting opportunities to intended outcomes
- Align conference and convention proposals with expected competency areas

Anticipated Future Updates

Lastly, it is the joint task force's expectation that these Professional Competency Areas and the outcomes contained within them will be reviewed and updated on a regular basis, especially as new topics and areas emerge within the field of student affairs and within the literature. The task force's goal is that this evolving model will be a useful framework to guide today's and tomorrow's student affairs practitioners as they become more strategic and intentional in their professional development. Anyone desiring an update to this document is asked to forward a detailed request to either ProDev@naspa.org or info@acpa.nche.edu. A description of the process for updating this document can be obtained from either the NASPA or ACPA offices.

Advising and Helping

Description:
The Advising and Helping competency area addresses the knowledge, skills, and attitudes related to providing counseling and advising support, direction, feedback, critique, referral, and guidance to individuals and groups.

Basic
One should be able to

- exhibit active listening skills (e.g., appropriately establishing interpersonal contact, paraphrasing, perception checking, summarizing, questioning, encouraging, avoid interrupting, clarifying);
- establish rapport with students, groups, colleagues, and others;
- facilitate reflection to make meaning from experience;
- understand and use appropriate nonverbal communication;
- strategically and simultaneously pursue multiple objectives in conversations with students;
- facilitate problem-solving;
- facilitate individual decision making and goal setting;
- challenge and encourage students and colleagues effectively;
- know and use referral sources (e.g., other offices, outside agencies, knowledge sources), and exhibit referral skills in seeking expert assistance;
- identify when and with whom to implement appropriate crisis management and intervention responses;
- maintain an appropriate degree of confidentiality that follows applicable legal and licensing requirements, facilitates the development of trusting relationships, and recognizes when confidentiality should be broken to protect the student or others;
- recognize the strengths and limitations of one's own worldview on communication with others (e.g., how terminology could either liberate or constrain others with different gender identities, sexual orientations, abilities, cultural backgrounds); and
- actively seek out opportunities to expand one's own knowledge and skills in helping students with specific concerns (e.g., suicidal students) and as well as interfacing with specific populations within the college student environment (e.g., student veterans).

Intermediate
One should be able to

- perceive and analyze unspoken dynamics in a group setting;
- facilitate or coach group decision making, goal setting, and process;
- conduct individual professional development needs assessment and group assessment of organizational needs;
- identify patterns of behavior that signal mental health concerns;
- manage conflict;
- mediate differences between or among individuals and groups;
- appropriately mentor students and staff;

- demonstrate culturally appropriate advising, helping, coaching, and counseling strategies;
- initiate crises intervention responses and processes;
- develop and implement successful prevention and outreach programs on campus, including effective mental health publicity and marketing;
- utilize technology (e.g., websites, social networking, video clips, podcasts) to address students' mental health issues;
- provide advocacy services to survivors of interpersonal violence;
- develop and distribute accurate and helpful mental health information for students, faculty, and staff;
- develop avenues for student involvement in mental health promotion and de-stigmatization of mental illness (e.g., creating student advisory councils, peer education programs, advising student mental health organizations);
- consult with mental health professionals as appropriate; and
- engage in research and publication of mental health issues.

Advanced

One should be able to

- provide effective counseling services to individuals and groups;
- assess responses to counseling interventions;
- provide and arrange for the necessary training and development for staff to enhance their advising and helping skills;
- exercise institutional crisis intervention skills, and coordinate crisis intervention and response processes;
- collaborate with other campus departments and organizations as well as surrounding community agencies and other institutions of higher education to address mental health concerns in a comprehensive, collaborative way;
- provide mental health consultation to faculty, staff, and campus behavioral assessment teams;
- provide effective posttraumatic response to campus events and situations, collaborating with other appropriate campus departments; and
- develop liaisons with community mental health providers to ensure seamless and coordinated care (e.g., with hospitalizations, transfer of care).

Assessment, Evaluation, and Research

Description:
The Assessment, Evaluation, and Research competency area (AER) focuses on the ability to use, design, conduct, and critique qualitative and quantitative AER analyses; to manage organizations using AER processes and the results obtained from them; and to shape the political and ethical climate surrounding AER processes and uses on campus.

Basic
One should be able to

- differentiate among assessment, program review, evaluation, planning, and research and the methodologies appropriate to each;
- effectively articulate, interpret, and use results of assessment, evaluation, and research reports and studies, including professional literature;
- facilitate appropriate data collection for system/department-wide assessment and evaluation efforts using up-to-date technology and methods;
- assess trustworthiness and other aspects of quality in qualitative studies and assess the transferability of these findings to current work settings;
- assess quantitative designs and analysis techniques, including factors that might lead to measurement problems, such as those relating to sampling, validity, and reliability;
- explain the necessity to follow institutional and divisional procedures and policies (e.g., IRB approval, informed consent) with regard to ethical assessment, evaluation, and other research activities;
- explain to students and colleagues the relationship of AER processes to learning outcomes and goals;
- identify the political and educational sensitivity of raw and partially processed data and AER results, handling them with appropriate confidentiality and deference to the organizational hierarchy; and
- align program and learning outcomes with organization goals and values.

Intermediate
One should be able to

- design ongoing and periodic data collection efforts such that they are sustainable, rigorous, as unobtrusive as possible, and technologically current;
- effectively manage, align, and guide implementation of results of assessment, evaluation, and research reports and studies;
- contribute to the understanding of colleagues, faculty, and others in the institution of the relationship of departmental AER processes to learning outcomes and goals at the student, department, division, and institutional levels;
- discern and discuss the appropriate design(s) to use in AER efforts based on critical questions, necessary data, and intended audience(s);
- construct basic surveys and other instruments with consultation;
- use culturally relevant and culturally appropriate terminology and methods to conduct and report AER findings;

- create the climate at the department level that assessment, evaluation, and research are central to the department's work and ensure that training and skill development in these areas is valued, budgeted for, and fully embedded in day-to-day procedures;
- apply the concepts and procedures of qualitative research, evaluation, and assessment, including creating appropriate sampling designs and interview protocols with consultation, participating in analysis teams, contributing to audit trails, participating as peer de-briefer, and using other techniques to ensure the trustworthiness of qualitative designs;
- participate in design and analysis of quantitative AER studies, including understanding statistical reporting that may include complex statistical methods such as multivariate techniques; and articulating the limitations of findings imposed by the differences in practical and statistical significance, validity, and reliability;
- manage the implementation of institutional and professional standards for ethical AER activities; and
- prioritize program and learning outcomes with organization goals and values.

Advanced

One should be able to

- effectively lead the conceptualization and design of ongoing, systematic, high-quality, data-based strategies at the institutional, divisional, and/or unit-wide level to evaluate and assess learning, programs, services, and personnel;
- effectively use assessment and evaluation results in determining the institution's, the division's, or the unit's accomplishment of its missions and goals, reallocation of resources, and advocacy for more resources;
- lead a comprehensive communication process to the campus community of the relationship of institutional AER processes to learning outcomes and goals at the student, department, division, and institution level;
- lead the writing of assessment and evaluation reports and other research studies and activities that include translation of data analyses into goals and action;
- lead the strategic use and prioritization of budgetary and personnel resources to support high-quality program evaluation, assessment efforts, research, and planning;
- lead, supervise, and/or collaborate with others to design and analyze qualitative studies and evaluation, assessment, and other research activities, including assessing transferability and trustworthiness in a sophisticated way;
- lead, supervise, and/or collaborate with others to design and analyze quantitative studies, data collection schemes, and other AER activities, including writing and disseminating statistical reporting for audiences at varying levels of statistical expertise in a way that informs practice;
- create the expectation in the institution, division, or unit that AER is central to professional practice and ensure that training and skill development happens across the organization;
- ensure institutional, divisional, or unit compliance with professional standards concerning ethical AER activities; and
- facilitate the prioritization of decisions and resources to implement those decisions that are informed by AER activities.

Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion

Description:
The Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) competency area includes the knowledge, skills, and attitudes needed to create learning environments that are enriched with diverse views and people. It is also designed to create an institutional ethos that accepts and celebrates differences among people, helping to free them of any misconceptions and prejudices.

Basic
One should be able to

- identify the contributions of similar and diverse people within and to the institutional environment;
- integrate cultural knowledge with specific and relevant diverse issues on campus;
- assess and address one's own awareness of EDI, and articulate one's own differences and similarities with others;
- demonstrate personal skills associated with EDI by participating in activities that challenge one's beliefs;
- facilitate dialogue effectively among disparate audiences;
- interact with diverse individuals and implement programs, services, and activities that reflect an understanding and appreciation of cultural and human differences;
- recognize the intersectionality of diverse identities possessed by an individual;
- recognize social systems and their influence on people of diverse backgrounds;
- articulate a foundational understanding of social justice and the role of higher education, the institution, the department, the unit, and the individual in furthering its goals;
- use appropriate technology to aid in identifying individuals with diverse backgrounds as well as assessing progress towards successful integration of these individuals into the campus environment;
- design culturally relevant and inclusive programs, services, policies, and practices;
- demonstrate fair treatment to all individuals and change aspects of the environment that do not promote fair treatment; and
- analyze the interconnectedness of societies worldwide and how these global perspectives affect institutional learning.

Intermediate

One should be able to

- engage in hiring and promotion practices that are fair, inclusive, proactive, and nondiscriminatory;
- integrate cultural knowledge with specific and relevant cultural issues on campus;
- develop effective multicultural training that expands the cultural knowledge of one's staff;
- identify systemic barriers to equality and inclusiveness, and then advocate for and implement means of dismantling them;
- apply advocacy skills to assist in the development of a more multiculturally sensitive institution and profession;
- supervise, challenge, and educate other professionals around issues of diversity and inclusion;
- facilitate others' learning and practice of social justice concepts;
- provide opportunities for self-reflection and self-evaluation on issues of EDI; and
- provide opportunities for diverse interactions with professionals in higher education who focus on this work.

Advanced

One should be able to

- ensure institutional policies, practices, facilities, structures, systems, and technologies respect and represent people's diverse abilities, beliefs, and characteristics;
- assess the effectiveness of the institution in addressing issues associated with EDI and in overcoming any barriers that exist;
- ensure that elements of EDI are demonstrated throughout institutional mission, goals, and programs;
- create ongoing strategic plans for the continued development of diversity initiatives and inclusive practices throughout the institution and ensure that competence in these areas is fully integrated into departmental practices throughout the campus;
- provide consultation to other units, divisions, or institutions on strategies to increase support and opportunities for underrepresented groups;
- provide leadership in fostering an institutional culture that supports the free and open exchange of ideas and beliefs, and where issues of power and privilege are identified and addressed;
- demonstrate effectiveness in responding to acts of hatred or intolerance that affect the institution; and
- ensure individuals throughout the institution are treated respectfully, justly, fairly, and impartially.

Ethical Professional Practice

Description:
The Ethical Professional Practice competency area pertains to the knowledge, skills, and attitudes needed to understand and apply ethical standards to one's work. While ethics is an integral component of all the competency areas, this competency area focuses specifically on the integration of ethics into all aspects of self and professional practice.

Basic
One should be able to

- articulate one's personal code of ethics for student affairs practice, which reflects the ethical statements of professional student affairs associations and their foundational ethical principles;
- describe the ethical statements and their foundational principles of any professional associations directly relevant to one's working context;
- explain how one's behavior embodies the ethical statements of the profession, particularly in relationships with students and colleagues, in the use of technology and sustainable practices, in professional settings and meetings, in global relationships, and while participating in job search processes;
- identify ethical issues in the course of one's job;
- utilize institutional and professional resources to assist with ethical issues (e.g., consultation with more experienced supervisors and/or colleagues, consultation with an association's Ethics Committee);
- assist students in ethical decision making and make referrals to more experienced professionals when appropriate;
- demonstrate an understanding of the role of beliefs and values in personal integrity and professional ethical practices;
- appropriately address institutional actions that are not consistent with ethical standards; and
- demonstrate an ethical commitment to just and sustainable practices.

Intermediate
One should be able to

- explain how one's professional practice also aligns with one's personal code of ethics and ethical statements of professional student affairs associations;
- identify and seek to resolve areas of incongruence between personal, institutional, and professional ethical standards;
- address and resolve lapses in ethical behavior among colleagues and students;
- recognize the legal influences on the ethical statements of different functional areas and professions within student affairs (e.g., medical professionals, counselors);
- identify and articulate the influence of various cultures in the interpretation of ethical standards; and
- articulate and implement a personal protocol for ethical decision making.

Advanced

One should be able to

- engage in effective consultation and provide advice regarding ethical issues with colleagues and students;
- ensure those working in the unit or division adhere to identified ethical guidelines and appropriately resolve disparities;
- actively engage in conversation with staff about the ethical statements of professional associations; and
- actively support the ethical development of other professionals as well as developing and supporting an ethical organizational culture within the workplace.

History, Philosophy, and Values

Description:
The History, Philosophy, and Values competency area involves knowledge, skills, and attitudes that connect the history, philosophy, and values of the profession to one's current professional practice. This competency area embodies the foundations of the profession from which current and future research and practice will grow. The commitment to demonstrating this competency area ensures that our present and future practices are informed by an understanding of our history, philosophy, and values.

Basic
One should be able to

- describe the foundational philosophies, disciplines, and values on which the profession is built;
- articulate the historical contexts of institutional types and functional areas within higher education and student affairs;
- describe the various philosophies that define the profession;
- demonstrate responsible campus citizenship;
- demonstrate empathy and compassion for student needs;
- describe the roles of both faculty and student affairs educators in the academy;
- explain the importance of service to the academy and to student affairs professional associations;
- articulate the principles of professional practice;
- articulate the history of the inclusion and exclusion of people with a variety of identities in higher education;
- explain the role and responsibilities of the student affairs professional associations;
- explain the purpose and use of publications that incorporate the philosophy and values of the profession;
- explain the public role and societal benefits of student affairs and of higher education generally;
- articulate an understanding of the ongoing nature of history and one's role in shaping it;
- model the principles of the profession and communicate the expectation of the same from colleagues and supervisees; and
- explain how the values of the profession contribute to sustainable practices.

Intermediate

One should be able to

- explain how today's practice is informed by historical context;
- explore new philosophical contexts and approaches;
- participate in opportunities to identify and incorporate emerging values of the profession into one's professional practice;
- actively engage in service to the academy and to student affairs professional associations;
- articulate the similarities and differences of varying international student affairs philosophies;
- teach the principles of the profession to staff;
- explain to staff the public responsibilities of a student affairs professional and the resulting benefits to society;
- articulate how historical lessons will inform one's future practice; and
- critically examine the history of the profession for contemporary meaning.

Advanced

One should be able to

- participate in developing new philosophical approaches and responsive values of the profession;
- partner with faculty for teaching and research regarding the profession;
- expand personal and professional opportunities for civic and global engagement;
- actively engage in service and leadership in the academy and in student affairs professional associations;
- model, encourage, and promote community by reinforcing the long-standing values of the profession;
- contribute to the research and scholarship of the profession;
- actively apply historical lessons to one's future practice;
- engage staff in critically examining history for contemporary meaning;
- demonstrate visionary and forward thinking in the work of the student affairs profession; and
- identify other countries' history and development of student affairs practice.

Human and Organizational Resources

Description:
The Human and Organizational Resources competency area includes knowledge, skills, and attitudes used in the selection, supervision, motivation, and formal evaluation of staff; conflict resolution; management of the politics of organizational discourse; and the effective application of strategies and techniques associated with financial resources, facilities management, fundraising, technology use, crisis management, risk management, and sustainable resources.

Basic
One should be able to

- describe appropriate hiring techniques and institutional hiring policies, procedures, and processes;
- demonstrate familiarity in basic tenets of supervision and possible application of these supervision techniques;
- explain how job descriptions are designed and support overall staffing patterns in one's work setting;
- design a professional development plan in one's current professional position that assesses one's strengths and weaknesses in one's current position, and establishes action items for fostering an appropriate level of growth;
- explain the application of introductory motivational techniques with students, staff, and others;
- describe the basic premises that underlie conflict in organizational and student life and the constructs utilized for facilitating conflict resolution in these settings;
- effectively and appropriately use facilities management procedures as related to operating a facility or program in a facility;
- articulate basic accounting techniques for budgeting, monitoring, and processing expenditures;
- demonstrate effective stewardship and use of resources (i.e., financial, human, material);
- use technological resources with respect to maximizing the efficiency and effectiveness of one's work;
- describe environmentally sensitive issues and explain how one's work can incorporate elements of sustainability;
- develop and disseminate agendas for meetings;
- communicate with others using effective verbal and nonverbal strategies appropriate to the situation in both one-on-one and small group settings;
- recognize how networks in organizations play a role in how work gets done;
- understand the role alliances play in the completion of goals and work assignments;
- describe campus protocols for responding to significant incidents and campus crises; and
- explain the basic tenets of personal or organizational risk and liability as they relate to one's work.

Intermediate

One should be able to

- implement appropriate and effective recruitment strategies, interview protocols and decisions regarding selection of staff;
- demonstrate applications of appropriate advanced techniques (i.e., coaching, performance accountability) for supervising unacceptable, marginal, and exceptional staff performance;
- identify the pros and cons of various staffing patterns, supporting job descriptions and work process configurations related to one's work setting;
- assist and/or direct individuals to develop professional development plans that are appropriate for individual growth while also serving the current and future needs of the unit where one is employed;
- apply a range of strategies available for motivating others;
- resolve conflict within the unit and between members of the unit and others;
- effectively develop and manage facilities, policies, procedures, processes, human resources, and materials;
- implement advanced accounting techniques that include forecasting, efficient use of fiscal resources, and interpretation of financial reports;
- identify and allocate the technological needs of the unit; maintain a level of technical knowledge that allows one to effectively use existing technologies as well as to incorporate new emerging technologies as they may benefit one's work;
- construct unit's operation to function in an environmentally aware fashion;
- describe how various fundraising strategies are facilitated by student affairs professionals;
- effectively manage and lead meetings through the use of agenda management strategies;
- communicate with others using effective verbal and nonverbal speaking strategies appropriate to the situation in one-on-one as well as small- and large-group settings;
- determine if the message (verbal and written) communicated is congruent with the desired outcome for the intended recipient or audience;
- create and present materials for formal presentations in the work setting and for professional associations;
- develop appropriate alliances with others as a means to efficiently and effectively complete work assignments; recognize how the formation of alliances can either enhance or detract from one's professional credibility or the use of teams;
- explain the interaction and integration of campus crisis intervention systems (National Incident Management System, behavioral intervention teams, critical incident response teams); and
- engage in policy and procedure development, implementation, and decision making that minimizes risk to self, students, other constituents, and the institution.

Continued on next page

Human and Organizational Resources (cont.)

Advanced

One should be able to

- develop recruitment and hiring strategies that encourage individuals from underrepresented groups to apply for positions;
- effectively intervene with employees in regard to morale, behavioral expectations, and conflict and performance issues;
- evaluate the effectiveness of current staffing patterns and supporting job descriptions in regard to a unit's ability to effectively meet institutional, divisional, and unit mission and goals;
- anticipate how future needs of students, the unit, or the division may affect staffing levels or structures and make proactive adjustments to meet those needs;
- develop or lead professional development initiatives that regularly assess the strength and weakness of professionals in the division and provide them with purposeful opportunities to advance their skills and knowledge;
- implement strategies for motivating individuals and groups that are challenged with elements of campus life disengagement, apathy, or aspects of decline of morale;
- manage conflict at a level of complexity where multiple entities are often at odds with each other and lead groups to effective and fair resolutions;
- assess facilities and resources (people, space, materials) in regard to institutional or divisional long-range planning and budget processes;
- develop long-range budgets that creatively and ethically apply fiscal resources to the needs and priorities of the unit, division, or organization;
- teach resource stewardship to others;
- discern the pace in which technological advances should appropriately be incorporated into organizational life (with students, staff, and other constituents);
- champion sustainability efforts within the unit and across the organization, and facilitate institutional support for broadening sustainability efforts;
- effectively implement fundraising initiatives that support divisional and institutional goals;
- align evidence-based decision-making strategies and planning with resource allocation and reallocation;
- assess the relationship between agenda management and the group dynamics that occur in meetings and how this relationship influences the realization of goals, the accomplishments of tasks, and any effects on participants;
- effectively speak on behalf of the institution with internal and external constituents (i.e., parents, prospective students, external organizations);
- assess the level of complexity of networks established and use this information to determine the strengths of these networks and how these networks may benefit or detract from the mission and goals of the institution or the division;
- assess the costs and benefits of current established political alliances, in particular, their relationships to fostering collaboration and organizational transparency;

- participate in developing, implementing, and assessing the effectiveness of the campus crisis management program; and
- effectively assess the level of individual and institutional risk and liability associated with programs and services offered; ensure that professionals are trained to deliver programs and services at the lowest level of risk possible.

Law, Policy, and Governance

Description:
The Law, Policy, and Governance competency area includes the knowledge, skills, and attitudes relating to policy development processes used in various contexts, the application of legal constructs, and the understanding of governance structures and their effect on one's professional practice..

Basic
One should be able to

- explain the differences between public and private higher education with respect to the legal system and what they may mean for students, faculty, and staff at both types of institutions;
- describe the evolving legal theories that define the student–institution relationship and how they affect professional practice;
- describe how national constitutions and laws influence the rights that students, faculty, and staff have on public and private college campuses;
- explain the concepts of risk management and liability reduction strategies;
- explain when to consult with one's immediate supervisor and campus legal counsel about those matters that may have legal ramifications;
- act in accordance with federal and state/province laws and institutional policies regarding nondiscrimination;
- describe how policy is developed in one's department and institution, as well as the local, state/province, and federal levels of government;
- identify the major policy makers who influence one's professional practice at the institutional, local, state/province, and federal levels of government;
- identify the internal and external special interest groups that influence policy makers at the department, institutional, local, state/province, and federal levels;
- describe the public debates surrounding the major policy issues in higher education, including access, affordability, accountability, and quality;
- describe the governance systems at one's institution, including the governance structures for faculty, staff, and students;
- describe the system used to govern or coordinate one's state/province system of higher education, including community college, for-profit, and private higher education; and
- describe the federal and state/province role in higher education.

Intermediate
One should be able to

- explain the legal theories connected with torts and negligence and how they affect professional practice;
- explain the legal theories connected with contract law and how they affect professional practice;
- incorporate best practices of the profession when managing institutional and personal tort liability;

- identify emerging trends in the law and understand how they affect current case precedent;
- appropriately consult with students or represent the student voice in departmental, divisional, and institutional policy development efforts;
- use data appropriately to guide the analysis and creation of policy;
- implement policies developed by one's department and institution, as well as the local, state/province, and federal levels of government;
- implement best practices of the profession to advance one's institution with respect to access, affordability, accountability, and quality;
- explain the operating parameters established by the internal governance system of one's institution as it relates to one's professional practice; and
- explain the parameters established by the external governing bodies to which one's institution reports as it relates to one's professional practice.

Advanced

One should be able to

- develop institutional policies and practices that are consistent with federal and state/province law;
- develop institutional policies and practices that effectively manage institutional and personal tort liability;
- develop institutional policies and practices consistent with contract law;
- develop institutional policies and practices consistent with civil rights, desegregation, and affirmative action law;
- develop institutional policies and practices consistent with emerging trends in higher education law;
- develop policies in one's department and institution; and influence policy making at the local, state/province, and federal levels of government when appropriate;
- ensure departmental programs and facilities are compliant with any applicable environmental policies or mandates from governing bodies;
- participate effectively in the governance system of one's institution when appropriate; and
- provide appropriate and ethical influence with the governing bodies to which one's institution reports.

Leadership

Description:
The Leadership competency area addresses the knowledge, skills, and attitudes required of a leader, whether it be a positional leader or a member of the staff, in both an individual capacity and within a process of how individuals work together effectively to envision, plan, effect change in organizations, and respond to internal and external constituencies and issues.

Basic
One should be able to

- describe how one's personal values, beliefs, histories, and perspectives inform one's view of oneself as an effective leader;
- identify one's strengths and weaknesses as a leader and seek opportunities to develop one's leadership skills;
- identify various constructs of leadership and leadership styles that include but are not limited to symbolic, expert, relational, and inspirational;
- identify basic fundamentals of teamwork and teambuilding in one's work setting and communities of practice;
- describe and apply the basic principles of community building;
- use technology to support the leadership process (e.g., seeking input or feedback, sharing decisions, posting data that support decisions, using group-support website tools);
- understand campus cultures (e.g., academic cultures, student cultures) and collaborative relationships, applying that understanding to one's work;
- articulate the vision and mission of the primary work unit, the division, and the institution;
- explain the values and processes that lead to organizational improvement;
- identify institutional traditions, mores, and organizational structures (e.g., hierarchy, networks, governing groups, nature of power, policies, goals, agendas and resource allocation processes) and how they influence others to act in the organization;
- explain the advantages and disadvantages of different types of decision-making processes (e.g., consensus, majority vote, and decision by authority);
- think critically and creatively, and imagine possibilities for solutions that do not currently exist or are not apparent;
- identify and then effectively consult with key stakeholders and those with diverse perspectives to make informed decisions;
- explain the effect of decisions on diverse groups of people, other units, and sustainable practices;
- articulate the logic used in making decisions to all interested parties;
- exhibit informed confidence in the capacity of ordinary people to pull together and take practical action to transform their communities and world; and
- identify and introduce conversations on potential issues and developing trends into appropriate venues such as staff meetings.

Intermediate
One should be able to

- compare, critique, and apply appropriate leadership models to various situations in organizational life;

- recognize the interdependence of members within organizational units;
- plan and organize a unit's resources in the support of unit, divisional, or institutional goals and objectives;
- identify potential obstacles or points of resistance when designing a change process;
- advocate for change within the division that would remove barriers to student and staff success;
- facilitate consensus processes where wide support is needed;
- intentionally include diverse others and their perspectives to inform decision making and reconcile diverse viewpoints;
- share data used to inform key decisions in transparent and accessible ways using appropriate technology;
- seek entrepreneurial perspectives when planning for change;
- give appropriate feedback to colleagues and students on skills they may seek to become more effective leaders;
- serve as a mentor for students, new professionals, or those new to the organizational unit;
- create environments that encourage students to view themselves as having the potential to make meaningful contributions to their communities and be civically engaged in their communities (residence hall, campus, local, state, or national); and
- willingly engage in campus governance in a manner that exemplifies responsible campus citizenry.

Advanced

One should be able to

- lead, motivate, influence, inspire, and enable others to contribute toward the effectiveness and success of the organization;
- display authenticity and congruence between one's true self and one's positional roles;
- promote, facilitate, and assess the effectiveness of collaborative initiatives and team-building efforts, using technology as appropriate to support such work;
- develop and promote a shared vision that drives unit, divisional, and institutional short- and long-term planning and the ongoing organizing of work;
- facilitate ongoing development, implementation and assessment of goal attainment at the unit and/or institutional level that is congruent with institutional mission and strategic plans;
- implement divisional strategies that account for ongoing changes in the cultural landscape, political landscape, global perspectives, and sustainability issues;
- take responsibility for unit and divisional decisions;
- establish systems to provide leadership opportunities for employees in such entities as committees, task forces, internships, and cross-functional roles;
- create a culture that advocates the appropriate and effective use of feedback systems (e.g., 360 feedback processes) for improving individual leadership and team performance;
- establish and sustain systems of mentoring to ensure students and professionals receive the support needed;
- convene appropriate personnel to identify and act on solutions to potential issues; and
- inform other units about issues that may affect their work.

Personal Foundations

Description:
The Personal Foundations competency area involves the knowledge, skills, and attitudes to maintain emotional, physical, social, environmental, relational, spiritual, and intellectual wellness; be self-directed and self-reflective; maintain excellence and integrity in work; be comfortable with ambiguity; be aware of one's own areas of strength and growth; have a passion for work; and remain curious

Basic
One should be able to

- identify key elements of one's set of personal beliefs and commitments (e.g., values, morals, goals, desires, self-definitions), as well as the source of each (e.g., self, peers, family, or one or more larger communities);
- identify one's primary work responsibilities and, with appropriate ongoing feedback, craft a realistic, summative self-appraisal of one's strengths and limitations;
- describe the importance of one's professional and personal life to self, and recognize the intersection of each;
- articulate awareness and understanding of one's attitudes, values, beliefs, assumptions, biases, and identity as it affects one's work with others; and take responsibility to develop personal cultural skills by participating in activities that challenge one's beliefs;
- recognize and articulate healthy habits for better living;
- articulate an understanding that wellness is a broad concept comprised of emotional, physical, social, environmental, relational, spiritual, and intellectual elements;
- identify and describe personal and professional responsibilities inherent to excellence;
- articulate meaningful goals for one's work;
- identify positive and negative effects on psychological wellness and, as appropriate, seek assistance from available resources; and
- recognize the importance of reflection in personal and professional development.

Intermediate
One should be able to

- identify the present and future utility of key elements in one's set of personal beliefs and commitments;
- recognize needs and opportunities for continued growth;
- identify sources of dissonance and fulfillment in one's life and take appropriate steps in response;
- recognize the effect between one's professional and personal life, and develop plans to manage any related concerns;
- articulate an understanding of others' attitudes, values, beliefs, assumptions, biases, and identity as they affect one's work;
- identify and employ resources to improve one's own wellness;
- analyze the effect one's health and wellness has on others, as well as the responsibility of individuals to create mutual, positive relationships;

- explain the process for executing responsibilities dutifully and thoughtfully;
- define excellence for one's self and evaluate how one's sense of excellence affects self and others;
- bolster one's psychological resiliency, including participating in stress-management activities, engaging in personal or spiritual exploration, and building healthier relationships in and out of the workplace; and
- analyze personal experiences for potential deeper learning and growth, and engage with others in reflective discussions.

Advanced

One should be able to

- refashion personal beliefs and commitments in a way that is true to one's own self while recognizing the contributions of important others (e.g., self, peers, family, or one or more larger communities);
- attend not only to immediate areas of growth, but also those areas relating to one's anticipated career trajectory;
- seek environments and collaborations that provide adequate challenge such that personal development is promoted, and provide sufficient support such that development is possible;
- mediate incongruencies between one's professional life and one's personal life;
- serve as a role model and mentor by sharing personal experiences and nurturing others' competency in this area, and assist colleagues in achieving work–life balance;
- create and implement an individualized plan for healthy living;
- exercise mutuality within relationships;
- critique others' sense of excellence, taking measures to encourage and inspire exceptional work in self and others;
- construct plans and systems to ensure excellence in self and others;
- demonstrate awareness of the psychological wellness of others in the workplace, and seek to engage with colleagues in a way that supports such wellness;
- transfer thoughtful reflection into positive future action; and
- design naturally occurring reflection processes within one's everyday work.

Student Learning and Development

Description:
The Student Learning and Development competency area addresses the concepts and principles of student development and learning theory. This includes the ability to apply theory to improve and inform student affairs practice, as well as understanding teaching and training theory and practice.

Basic
One should be able to

- articulate theories and models that describe the development of college students and the conditions and practices that facilitate holistic development;
- articulate how differences of race, ethnicity, nationality, class, gender, age, sexual orientation, gender identity, disability, and religious belief can influence development during the college years;
- identify and define types of theories (e.g., learning, psychosocial and identity development, cognitive-structural, typological, and environmental);
- identify the limitations in applying existing theories and models to varying student demographic groups;
- articulate one's own developmental journey and identify one's own informal theories of student development and learning (also called "theories-in-use") and how they can be informed by formal theories to enhance work with students;
- generate ways in which various learning theories and models can inform training and teaching practice;
- identify and construct learning outcomes for both daily practice as well as teaching and training activities; and
- assess teaching, learning, and training and incorporate the results into practice.

Intermediate
One should be able to

- design programs and services to promote student learning and development that are based on current research on student learning and development theories;
- utilize theory-to-practice models to inform individual or unit practice;
- justify using learning theory to create learning opportunities;
- identify and take advantage of opportunities for curriculum and program development and construct, where appropriate, in order to encourage continual learning and developmental growth;
- construct effective lesson plans and syllabi;
- create and assess learning outcomes to evaluate progress toward fulfilling the mission of the department, the division, and the institution; and
- teach, train, and practice in such a way that utilizes the assessment of learning outcomes to inform future practice.

Advanced

One should be able to

- utilize theory to inform divisional and institutional policy and practice;
- explain theory to diverse audiences (e.g., colleagues, faculty, students, parents, policy makers) and use it effectively to enhance understanding of the work of student affairs;
- analyze and critique prevailing theory;
- contribute to the development of theories;
- identify staff members' level of competency regarding the ability to apply learning and development theory to practice, and create professional development opportunities utilizing various learning concepts;
- evaluate and assess the effectiveness of learning and teaching opportunities at the division level, communicate its effectiveness to the larger campus community, and explain opportunities for collaboration and integrated learning opportunities;
- build and support inclusive and welcoming campus communities that promote deep learning and foster student success; and
- communicate the learning orientation of student affairs to the campus community.

Appendix

Reference:

Weiner, L., Bresciani, M. J., Hickmott, J., & Felix, E. (under review). A document analysis of professional standards expected for student affairs practitioners. *Georgia Journal of College Student Affairs*.

Table 1. Documents Included in the Analysis

	Document	Source
Document A	ACPA Professional Competencies (2008)	ACPA
Document B	NASPA PowerPoint Presentation (2009)	NASPA
Document C	NASPA Matrix Presentation Slides (2008) & NASPA Professional Development Curriculum to the CAS Characteristics Slides (2007)	NASPA
Document D	NASPA Standards of Professional Practice Slides (2008)	NASPA
Document E	Standards: CAS Constitution for Student Affairs Professionals Conference Presentation	CAS
Document F	CAS Contextual Statement on Individual Excellence	CAS
Document G	CAS Shared Ethical Principles	CAS
Document H	CAS Standards for Learning & Development Outcomes	CAS
Document I	CAS General Standards	CAS
Document J	ACPA ASK (Assessment Skills and Knowledge) Standards	ACPA
Document K	NASPA Report of the Professional Standards Division (March 2005) & Discussion Document on a Curriculum for Professional Development (Spring 2005)	NASPA
Document L	Draft Proposed Goals for NASPA Professional Standards Division (February 17, 2009)	NASPA
Document M	Feedback on Adopting Professional Standards Matrix	NASPA
Document N	ACPA Ethical Principles	ACPA
Document O	NASPA Discussion Document–Professional Development (2004)	NASPA
Document P	Student Affairs Research Questions that Matter (A Faculty Fellows Project)	NASPA
Document Q	NASPA Report for the Summer 2009 Board of Directors Meeting	NASPA

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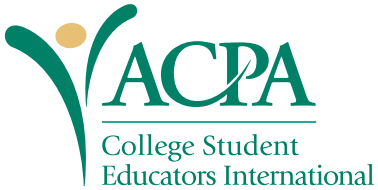

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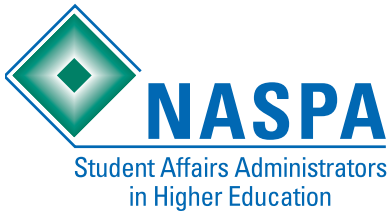

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