Exploring Methods and Models for Assessing Student Competencies
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Workshop

Implementation of the 2009 NASPAA accreditation standards has placed expanded responsibility on programs to demonstrate substantive links between their mission, curriculum content and the acquisition/utilization of competencies in the five universal domains as well as specialization areas.

While the new standards allow significant latitude in instructional design and content, they also impose higher expectations for programs to demonstrate how these competencies are (1) mission-related, (2) embedded in the curriculum, (3) regularly assessed and (4) influence future programmatic elements.

This workshop expands on a topic explored at the 2012 NASPAA annual conference[1] involving sharing insights – and artifacts – from the now-emerging student competency assessment process. This includes open discussion among participants regarding practical strategies for informing/engaging faculty, alumni and students, using focus groups and stakeholder surveying, defining competencies in terms consistent with program mission, clarifying links between competencies, course content and student learning goals, determining assessment activities (frequency, location, methodology, etc.) and how the assessment process informs changes to the curriculum and/or future program requirements.

In addition, workshop participants will be encouraged to provide examples of logic models, rubrics, survey instruments, focus group questions or other artifacts they have utilized (or are considering utilizing) in developing their own competency tracking systems. As one basis for discussion, processes and documents utilized by the School of Public Policy and Administration, University of Delaware, as part of our 2010-2011 NASPAA re-accreditation process will be shared with workshop participants. Other programs are welcome to share their processes/materials as well.

Ultimately, the focus of this workshop is not to declare "one best way" for constructing student learning outcomes assessment, but rather to explore a broad range of strategies and tactics that best correspond to the mission, instructional goals, student interests and resource capabilities of individual programs.

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[1] *COPRA Accreditation Institute: Competency Assessment Example Panel (*Auburn University, California State university, Long Beach and the University of Delaware (October 20, 2012).