**Outline of NASPAA Accreditation Institute**

**October 11, 2017 | Washington, DC**

**8:00-9:00 am - Joint Session**

**Session 1ABC: Program Representatives and Site Visitors: The Strategic Power of Accreditation**

Virtually every program engaged in initial NASPAA accreditation or re-accreditation recognizes the necessary compliance nature of the process. Fewer appreciate the powerful impact that NASPAA accreditation can have in assisting programs develop and sustain a valuable position in the graduate education marketplace through strategic management. This session will introduce program administrators and faculty to how NASPAA standards can enhance their efforts to develop/refine program mission, strategy (i.e., curriculum, service delivery, tuition/scholarships, recruitment/admission), and performance evaluation with a focus on continuous program improvement and long-term viability.

1. MPA Life Cycle Insights Helpful in Strategic Planning

A. Many Observers Would Argue That the U.S. Market for Professional, Terminal Degrees such as the MPA, Exhibits All the Characteristics of a Mature Market—

1. Rate of enrollment growth slowing, overcapacity is beginning to characterize some regions
2. Competition has intensified, some programs have scaled back enrollment goals, in some markets under-enrolled programs are closing
3. Speciality programs are becoming more common—student population specialists, curriculum/service delivery specialists, and research/scholarship/service specialists
4. Future enrollment may well depend on population growth and replacement demand
5. Future success will increasingly depend on program distinctiveness in the graduate professional education marketplace
6. The Purpose of Strategic Management is Distinctive Value Creation
7. Strategic Planning is Fundamental to Deploying Increasingly Scarce Resources to Achieve Highest and Best Use
8. The Goal is to Find Those Individuals in the Marketplace “Who Love Us Most for What We Do Best”
9. This Is An Over-Simplification of An Approach to Strategy Known as Resource Advantage Theory. It Presumes an Existing Entity Focused on Serving Stakeholders and It Seeks to Achieve Sustainability by Capitalizing on, Enhancing Current Strengths
10. I Argue That All of the Considerations Implicated in Resource Advantage Theory Are Inherent in NASPAA Accreditation
11. If We Pursue the Accreditation Process With an Eye To Creating Distinctive, Valuable Programs, We Can Make Our Offerings Stronger and Enhance the Likelihood of Long-Term Viability
12. It Is the Case that Most Programs Begin the Accreditation or Re-Accreditation Process by Crafting or Reviewing/Revising a Mission Statement. I’d like to suggest an approach that is somewhat different.
13. Formulation of a Mission (Not a Statement) Ought to Explicitly Consider the Following Six Questions.
14. What Are the Strengths, Diversity, and Achievements of Your Faculty. These are the people who create and deliver your program’s student experience, make scholarly contributions, and impact our communities through service.

Does your mission take full advantage of their competencies? Is your mission fully aligned with the values and strengths of your faculty and vice versa? How does your faculty’s strengths differ from those of other faculties? **Standard 3**

1. What Are the Strengths of Your Curriculum? Does it embody a particular set of values, a particular philosophy, or a particular point of view? Does it cohere with your mission? How does it differ from other curricula available to students? **Standard 5**
2. What Are the Strengths of Your Pedagogy? Do you deliver coursework in a high-impact manner? Are you particularly good at a certain delivery modality? What distinguishes your pedagogy from other offerings? **Standard 5**
3. What Are the Strengths of Your Student Support Infrastructure? How do the investments made in advising, academic support, internship acquisition and supervision, and career management align with mission, augment your curriculum, and differentiate your program? **Standard 4**
4. Who, Specifically, in the Graduate Education Marketplace Values the Strengths of Your Faculty, Your Curriculum, Your Pedagogy, and/or Your Student Support Infrastructure?

Is there a particular group of students, employers, or professionals who will differentially benefit from what your program is and does? Could be defined by experience, geography, career goals, etc. **Standard 1**

1. For the Time, Effort, Opportunity Cost, and Tuition/Fees Invested in Your Program, Will Particular Groups of Students Find Your Offering to Be A Superior Value? What Scholarships, Graduate Assistantships, and the Like Are Consistent With Your Mission?

**Standard 1**

1. This Approach to Strategy Then, Is Comprised of Three Inputs--Know Thyself, Know Thy Consumer, Know Thy Marketplace
2. Answers to the Six Questions Posed Above Allow the Formulation of a Mission that Conforms to Accreditation Expectations, But More Importantly Positions a Program for Success and Continuous Improvement
3. At Its Most Fundamental, A Mission Statement is a Program’s Promise to Its Stakeholders and Should State or Imply Metrics of Success **Standard 1**
4. For Some, A Mission Statement Is Synonymous with A Value Proposition

A Statement that Guides the Design and Delivery of Something of Distinct Value to the Group of Consumers Most Likely to “Love You Most for What You Do Best

1. Once You Know or Have Refined Your Mission, and Encapsulated It in a Statement, You Are Able to Better Determine What It Will Take to Deliver on That Promise
2. Consideration of Administrative and Faculty Capacity and Governance Come Into Play **Standard 2**
3. As Does Resource Adequacy—Sufficient Funding, Physical Facilities, IT Support, Etc.
4. Both of These Have Implications for the Budget Work Needed to Obtain Adequate Support **Standard 6**
5. Last, Information Has Impact Only When a Particular Audience Learns Something New, Something Different, About Something Important to Them
6. Empirical Evidence Makes Clear that Communication Efforts Are Most Effective When We Convey Information New, Different, and Meaningful to A Particular Audience
7. This Process Puts Programs in a Position to Tell a Compelling Story via Recruitment and Admission Efforts and Broader Communications to Current Students, Faculty, Staff and Administrators, Alumni, and Employers. **Standards 4 and 7**
8. This Approach Embraces the View that NASPAA Accreditation is Not an End in Itself. Accreditation is a Mean to Several Ends…
9. First and Foremost, Accreditation as a Strategic Process Can Help Each of Our Programs Create and Deliver an Ever-Improving Student Experience
10. Accreditation as a Strategic Process Can Help Each of Us Attract and Retain Great Faculty Members
11. Accreditation as a Strategic Process Can Help Each of Us Ensure that We Are Putting Our Scarce Resources to Highest and Best Use