



# Answering the “How-Do-We-Know?” Question

Assessment Institute  
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## Outcomes of Today's Presentation

- Become acquainted with CAS
  - Language
  - Process
  - Products
- Understand and prepare for the self-assessment process
- Learn from others
- Leave this meeting knowing what to do and when



# Understanding CAS



## Mission of CAS

The mission of the **Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education** (CAS) is to promote the improvement of programs and services to enhance the quality of student learning and development.



# Why Look at CAS & Learning Outcomes?

- Preparation for accreditation
- Licensure – Certification
- Institutional self-studies
- Program review
- Measure effectiveness
- New program development
- Expansion of current programs
- Staff development
- Academic preparation
- Ethical practice
- Credibility & accountability
- Improve student learning
- Examine congruence with institution's stated mission
- Performance budgeting
- Investigate programmatic concerns (access, cost, changes)
- Curiosity



# CAS Fundamental Elements About Self-Assessment

- Internally driven
- Provides useful information
- Provides reasonably accurate information
- Is systematic & regular
- Is effective in terms of time, cost, etc.
- Charts quality program development & professionalism
- Develops a shared vision among constituents
- Guides solid staff development
- Relies on honesty with meticulous evaluation
- Assembles results into an action plan for improvement



# Format of CAS Standards & Guidelines



## CAS Standards

- Sets of standards vs. statements of standards
- Standards and guidelines are basic statements that should be achievable by any program in any institution when adequate and appropriate effort, energy, and resources are applied
- Standards reflect a level of good program practice generally agreed upon by the profession at large





# Organization of CAS Standards & Component Parts

## Contextual Statement Standards

1. Mission
2. Program
3. Leadership
4. Human Resources
5. Ethics
6. Legal Responsibilities
7. Equity and Access
8. Diversity
9. Organization and Management
10. Campus and External Relations
11. Financial Resources
12. Technology
13. Facilities and Equipment
14. Assessment and Evaluation



## CAS Standards . . .

- Represent **indispensable** requirements of practice
- Are achievable by all programs
- Appear in **BOLD** print
- Use auxiliary verbs **must** and **shall**



# Understanding CAS Standards

**Example:**

**Standard (BOLD type)**

**Auxiliary verb MUST or SHALL**

**Both students and advisors must assume shared responsibility in the advising process. AAP must assist students to make the best academic decisions possible by encouraging identification and assessment of alternatives and consideration of the consequences of their decisions.**



## CAS Guidelines . . .

- Clarify & amplify standards
- Guides enhanced practice beyond essential functions
- Appear in light-faced or regular type
- Use verbs **should** and **may**



## Understanding CAS Guidelines

**Example:**

**Guideline (LIGHT-FACED type)**

**Auxiliary verb SHOULD or MAY**

The ultimate responsibility for making decisions about educational plans and life goals should rest with the individual student.



# Understanding CAS Guidelines

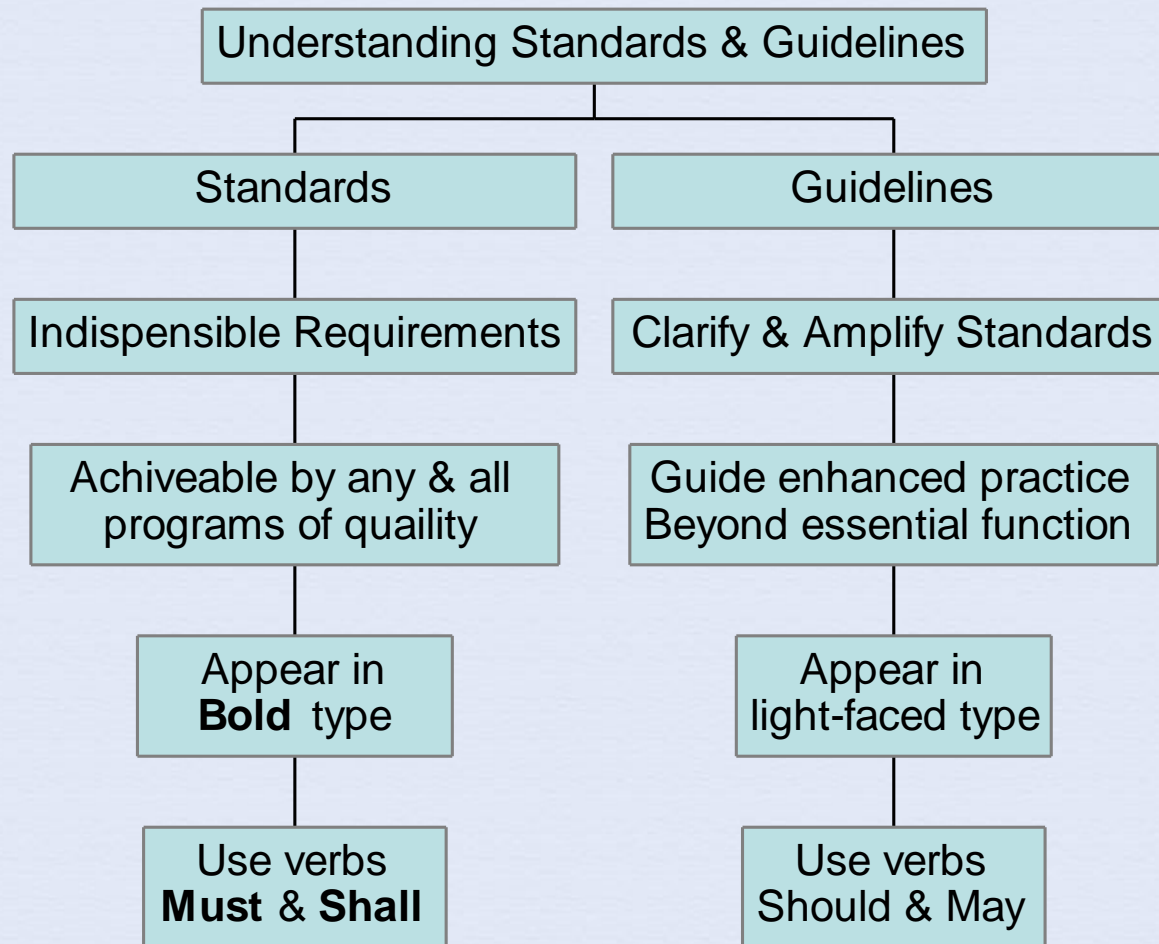
## **Example from the Academic Advising Standards:**

**Both students and advisors must assume shared responsibility in the advising process. AAP must assist students to make the best academic decisions possible by encouraging identification and assessment of alternatives and consideration of the consequences of their decisions.**

The ultimate responsibility for making decisions about educational plans and life goals should rest with the individual student.



# Standards and Guidelines





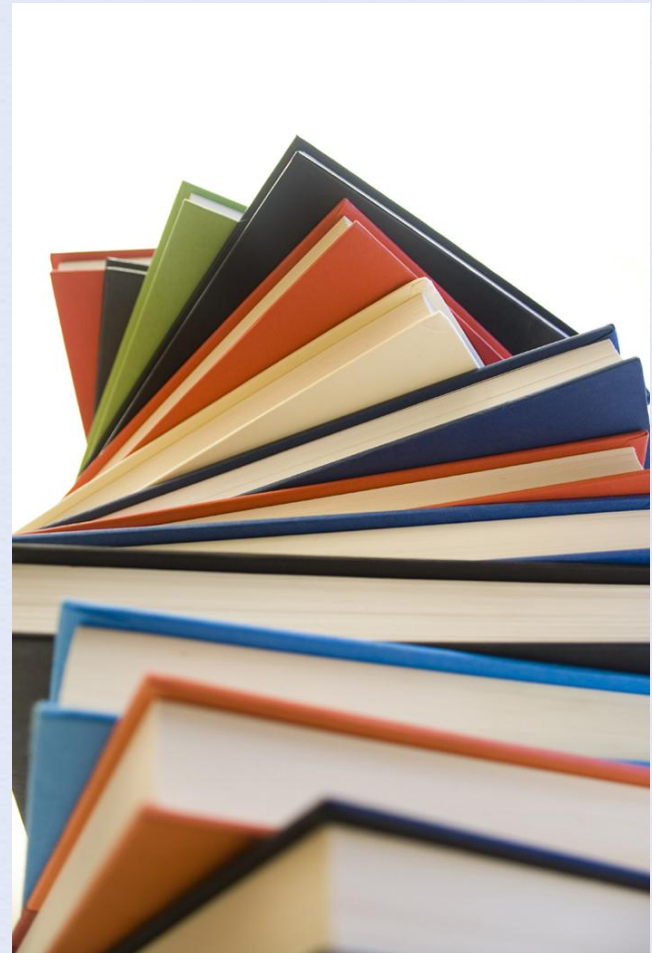
# CAS Student Learning & Development Outcomes





# Learning and Development Outcomes Within the CAS Model

- Six Student Learning & Development Outcome Domains are a part of the CAS General Standards
- Stated expectation in the CAS General Standards that all functional area programs must place emphasis on identifying relevant learning outcomes and assessing their achievement by students





# CAS Student Learning Outcome Domains and Dimensions

- Knowledge acquisition, construction, integration and application
  - Understanding knowledge from a range of disciplines
  - Connecting knowledge to other knowledge, ideas and experiences (integration)
  - Constructing knowledge
  - Relating knowledge to daily life
- Cognitive complexity
  - Critical thinking
  - Reflective thinking
  - Effective thinking
  - Creativity
- Intrapersonal development
  - Realistic self-appraisal, self-understanding, and self-respect
  - Identity development
  - Commitment to ethics and integrity
  - Spiritual awareness



# CAS Domains & Dimensions

- Interpersonal competence
  - Meaningful relationships
  - Interdependence
  - Collaboration
  - Effective leadership
- Humanitarianism & civic engagement
  - Understanding and appreciation of cultural and human differences
  - Social responsibility
  - Global perspective
  - Sense of civic responsibility
- Practical competence
  - Pursuing goals
  - Communicating effectively
  - Technological competence
  - Managing personal affairs
  - Managing career development
  - Demonstrating professionalism
  - Maintaining health and wellness
  - Living a purposeful and satisfying life



**Decisions and Actions that Will  
Ensure the Best Results**



## Decisions to be Made

- What is your purpose for using CAS standards?
  - Assessment and/or accreditation, other
- How much do you want to know?
  - Extensive study or snap shot
- Do you have other agenda items?
  - Enhance collaboration
  - Enhance consistency between campus sites
  - Need evidence to increase funding, facilities, staffing



# CAS Self-Assessment Process



# Ground Rules for Self-Assessment

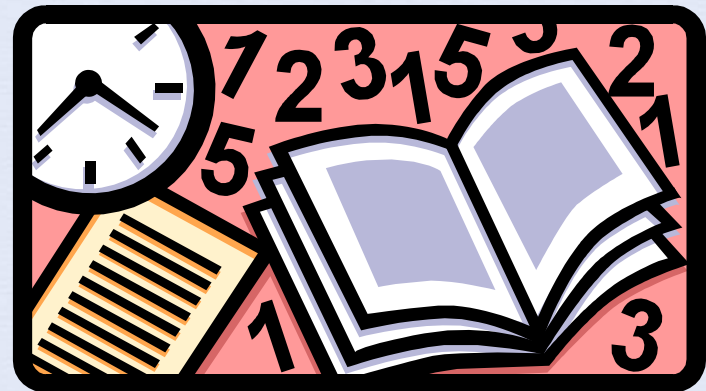
**Management team committed to program improvement**

**Decisions will be in the best interest of the institution**

**Recognition & rewards for exceptional programs**

**All team members valued & can contribute to decisions**

**Mutual trust among participants**





## Self-Assessment Guides

- Translates CAS standards into an effective workbook format to enable self-assessment
- Is used for self-assessment of a program's strengths and weaknesses and the development of an action plan
- Are organized into the fourteen components of the CAS Standards SAGs offer a ready format for evaluation
- In most instances, there are multiple criterion statements for each standard
- Each criterion measure focuses on a particular aspect of the standard, allowing raters to express more detailed and specific judgments





# Criterion Measure Rating Scale

ND	1	2	3	4	NR
Not Done	Not met	Minimally Met	Well Met	Fully Met	Not Rated

Using this scale, consider each criterion statement and decide...

The extent to which each criterion measure has been met by the program or service.



# Assessment Criteria Example

## **Academic Advising**

### **Part 10. Campus and External Relations**

#### **Criterion Measures**

- 10.1 AAP reaches out to relevant individuals, campus offices, and external agencies to:
  - 10.1.1 establish, maintain, and promote effective relations
  - 10.1.2 disseminate information about its own and other related programs and services
  - 10.1.3 coordinate and collaborate, where appropriate, in offering programs and services to meet the needs of students and promote achievement of student learning and development outcomes.
  
- 10.2 AAP has:
  - 10.2.1 procedures and guidelines consistent with institutional policy for responding to threats, emergencies, and crisis situations
  - 10.2.2 systems and procedures for disseminating timely and accurate information to students and other members of the campus community during emergency situations
  - 10.2.3 procedures and guidelines consistent with institutional policy for communicating with the media.



## Six Steps of the Program Review Process

1. Assemble Your Team(s)
2. Educate Your Team(s)
3. Review Evidence & Conduct Rating
4. Complete Action Plan
5. Prepare a Descriptive Report
6. Close the Loop



## **Step 1: Assemble Your Teams**

- Work Teams &/or Evaluation Teams
- Size:
  - 3-5 members for a single functional area comprised of stakeholders including students
  - 8-10 members for a diverse department or division comprised of stakeholders including students
- Composition: internal, external
- Coordinator/Leader



## Step 2: Educate Your Teams

- Establish team ground rules
- Distribute the Self-Assessment Guides
- Review Standards and Guidelines
- Discuss meaning of each standard
- Establish team's inter-rater reliability
  - Discuss, consider & set criteria
  - Build a common language, i.e. “well met”, “fully met”, standards, guidelines
- Encourage team discussion; expect disagreements; commit to consensual resolution
- Adapt to institution and your specific purposes
- Review evidence



# Evaluative Evidence

## STUDENT RECRUITMENT MATERIALS:

- Brochures & other program information
- Participation policies & procedures

## PROGRAM DOCUMENTS:

- Mission statements; program purpose & philosophy statements
- Catalogs & related materials
- Staff & student manuals; policies & procedures statements

## ADMINISTRATIVE DOCUMENTS:

- Organization charts; student & staff profiles
- Financial resource statements & budgets
- Annual reports

## STAFF ACTIVITY REPORTS:

- Curriculum vitae & resumes; professional activity
- Service to other programs, departments, or community

## STUDENT ACTIVITY REPORTS:

- Portfolios, developmental transcripts, resumes
- Reports of student service

## RESEARCH & EVALUATION DATA:

- Needs assessments & self-studies
- Program evaluation; graduate & follow-up studies



## **Step 3: Review Evidence & Conduct Rating**

- Gather evidence
- Conduct rating
- Individuals rate the agreed upon criterion measures
- Discuss as a group and gain consensus
- Identify strengths and weaknesses



## Step 4: Complete Action Plan

- Respond to the Overview Questions at the end of each rating section
  - Designed to stimulate summary thinking about overarching issues
- Identify areas of program strength
  - Where excellent performance or accomplishment exceeds criterion and is viewed as excellent or exemplary
- Identify areas of program weakness
  - Program shortcomings that fail to meet criterion measures and/or rating discrepancies among raters of two point or more
  - Viewed as unsatisfactory by at least one rater





## **Step 4: Complete Action Plan**

- Describe practices requiring follow-up
  - Note criterion measure numbers deemed less than satisfactory and describe practice shortcomings that need to be strengthened
- Write program action plan for implementing program changes
  - Prepare a comprehensive action plan
  - Identify resources (i.e., human, fiscal, physical) that are essential to program enhancement
  - Set dates by which specific actions are to be completed
  - Identify responsible parties to complete the action steps
  - Set tentative start-up date for initiating a subsequent self-study



## **Step 5: Prepare a Descriptive Report**

- Explain the mission, purpose, and philosophy of program
- Summarize the available data
- Recommend specific plans for action
- Include resources needed, dates for completion & identify responsible persons

## **Step 6: Close the Loop**

- Special actions for program enhancement are recommended
- Action plan is communicated
- Specific actions are aligned with strategic plans
- Go through channels to request resources needed
- Thank members of the evaluation team



## Final Report Format

- Executive Summary
- Copy of Standards
- Summary of Initial Findings
- Copy of Original Action Plan
  - Scores, strengths, & recommendations
- List of Actions Taken with Completion Dates & Evidence of Completion
- Lessons Learned to be Used for Next Program Review
- Final Comments



# Lessons Learned at ASU-Beebe



## Why Used CAS?

- Had an insufficient culture of assessment.
- Were facing a self-study and accreditation visit.
- Wanted more than a “slice” of one functional area.
- Considered others but decided to use CAS because:
  - United the division on common project
  - Provided common learning experiences, language, and training materials, and reports
  - Could support each other through the process
  - Used by TRIO so we had a couple of people who were already familiar with materials and could offer guidance



## Lessons Learned

- Leadership is critical (cheerleader, monitor progress, provide resources)
- Allowed staff to implement change
- Created new partnerships and enhanced relationships (internal and external) and allowed others to see the scope of what we do in Student Services
- Raters were afraid to be honest despite what I said over and over, had to wait to see the results and actions taken
- CAS materials are flexible – use as needed
- Evidence is key
- Can shorten the time frame for the ratings if data/evidence is gathered ahead of time



## Lessons Learned

- Multi-campus issues: hard to ensure all campuses were represented in ratings and evidence, hard to ensure represented in final reports
- Multi-campus strength: encouraged working together to decide common elements that needed to be included in a functional area or program but decided each campus could approach implementation differently because of populations served



# Lessons Learned at Southwestern Michigan College





## Why Used CAS?

- Instruction had developed a culture of outcomes assessment; student affairs needed to do the same.
- We had no knowledge of other appropriate tools that covered all of our functional areas, and we wanted a tool that would be consistent from area to area.
- This endeavor provided leadership development opportunities for the division's directors and coordinators.



## Lessons Learned

- We could not *start* our self-assessment journey using the CAS Self-Assessment Guides; we had to become comfortable with assessment first.
  - We developed several forms to enable division leaders to get their feet wet with assessment over the course of two years.
  - Using the SAGs came after each department had already conducted smaller self-assessment projects.
- Conducting two levels of self-assessment made the most sense, one without evidence and the second with evidence.



# CAS Resources



## CAS Resources

- *CAS Professional Standards for Higher Education (7<sup>th</sup> Edition)* (Blue Book)
  - Includes contextual statements and standards
  - Next book released in August 2012
- *Self Assessment Guides CD (Version 4.2) (SAGs)*
  - E-Learning Course – Conducting a Self-Assessment
- *Frameworks for Assessing Learning & Development Outcomes (2006) (FALDOs)*
  - Available on CD
- *CAS Statement of Shared Ethical Principles*
- *CAS Characteristics of Individual Excellence*
- Web Site: [www.cas.edu](http://www.cas.edu)



## Questions?

If you need assistance, please do not hesitate to contact us at:

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