UTILIZING THE COUNCIL FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF STANDARDS IN HIGHER EDUCATION COMPONENTS AS BENCHMARKS FOR CAMPUS ACTIVITIES PROGRAMS

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The purpose of this study was to examine the use of The Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education (CAS) functional unit standards for Campus Activities Programs (CAP) as approximate benchmarks informing the initial steps in a large, multi-campus benchmarking process. The study was framed within Astin's (1985) theory of involvement underpinning the CAS unit standards examined (Miller, 2003). The study also utilized assumptions and principles found in the Upcraft and Shuh (1996) benchmarking model for student affairs.

A survey consisting of 126-items collected campus activities program leader demographic information, commentary and opinions. Thirty two campus activities personnel working at 20 university campus locations participated in the study. Ratings of the applicability and importance of CAS standards statements for 13 component areas produced summary means used for the selection of quality improvement benchmarks.

Personnel rated highly the applicability of CAS standard components to improving the campus activities program as well as the importance the standards provided to work. Approximate CAS benchmarks were selected for the program examined using a gap analysis of the difference represented between the ratings. Findings indicated the CAS standards represent a suitable framework from which staff can be empowered to identify and define quality improvement

benchmarks for campus activities programs. Variation of responses in the study indicated that the component area of Facilities, Technology, Equipment, called for expanded definition and refinement. Further study should explore the role of CAS as a central resource in higher education providing approximate benchmarks to inform benchmarking and the identification of best practice programs, services, and operations in student affairs. Additional study suggested expanding the survey and extension of methods utilizing the CAS standards as a basis for the construction of functional unit quality improvement benchmarks in student affairs.

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I. INTRODUCTION

Benchmarking is the prescribed study of the practices and methods of leading organizations to understand what they are doing and how they are doing it. Benchmarks are the targets and indicators identified within the process defining what is to be studied, measured and judged. Few authoritative and comprehensive professional resources in student affairs explicitly define benchmark criteria for "quality assurance" in the campus activities programs. The Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education (CAS) present sets of nationally derived functional unit standards as norms and measures that programs should be expected to meet with reasonable effort and diligence (Miller, p. 2-3, 2003).

This study explored the use of the CAS standards for the identification of approximate benchmarks for the student affairs functional unit. While the CAS standards exist as models and guidelines for practice, the study explored a theory to practice use by focusing on the standards as benchmark indicators defining needed quality improvement targets for the functional unit. The study limited its scope to working within the first four steps defined in the Upcraft and Shuh (1996) benchmarking model for student affairs. Individual CAS standard components in 13 areas were explored to approximate practice benchmarks for a large University multi-campus activities program. While the study did not engage the entire benchmarking process, it developed an example of how a student affairs project may be initiated to meet critical needs identified within the literature.

The engagement within the model identified CAS proxies "[d]etermining what to benchmark" (Upcraft & Shuh, 1996, p.244) to provide the needed content, criteria and indicators as a

starting point from which the program examined could "measure and improve their way of performing" (Bryan, 1996, p.40). By assessing staff perceptions of the applicability and importance of the CAS standards to improving the program and importance to individual work, the study planned the first steps in a benchmarking in a "bottom up" process. As new research which brought together several concepts identified within the literature as important to benchmarking in student affairs, it posed broader implications for the profession.

II. THE PROBLEM

A. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The campus activities programs examined in this study are similar to others across the country regarding the scope of work, organizational practices, staffing and the need for quality improvement. The CAS standards emerged in the literature as a primary link binding student affairs practitioners together across higher education institutions regardless of institutional affiliations, campuses and organizational cultures. Because this effort described the perceptions of student affairs personnel regarding the use of professional standards as benchmarks for benchmarking in campus activities programs, it posed broader implications to the student affairs profession as a whole.

The need to expand research in this area has been advocated to develop a more informed and focused understanding of personnel, systems and unit-level work environments in student affairs (Bender & Shuh, 2002; Kezar, 2001; Upcraft & Shuh, 1996). Results enabled the researcher to make informed benchmark selections, conclusions and recommendations regarding the student affairs personnel involved and the campus activities programs examined. This type of preliminary identification and assessment of the perceptions of the personnel to be most involved in the execution of benchmarking efforts is observed as an initial and critical consideration (McCatherine, 1999; Xue, 1998; Upcraft & Shuh, 1996).

B. CONTEXT FOR THE STUDY

Benchmarking is a quality improvement technique that enhances organizational performance by enabling rapid innovation and change through the identification of superior standards, or, "benchmarks". Brian (1996) characterized benchmarking in student affairs as requiring the identification of a "standard against which an organization can measure and improve their way of performing some task or role" (p. 40). The identification of benchmarks is an initial step needed to inform the study of methods, activities, actions and knowledge required for more comprehensive quality improvement efforts. Unlike its rapid growth and expansion in the American corporate sector and limited areas of higher education, benchmarking in student affairs observed fewer projects and a modest amount of information identifying how benchmarking efforts are conducted in the more diverse student affairs functional units.

Standards which may be adapted as proxy benchmarks for student affairs are defined by the Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education (CAS). CAS represents the most authoritative, detailed and comprehensive professional standards defining "quality assurance" (Miller, 2003, p. 2) for the student affairs profession. Upcraft and Shuh (1996) clarified the potential of CAS as benchmarks for student affairs by characterizing them as "a set of nationally derived norms, as criterion measures against which to make judgments…promulgated for the sole purpose of providing criteria that individual institutions and programs could use to implement self-evaluations"(Miller, 2003, p. 253). CAS represents quality "criteria that every higher education institution and its student support programs should be expected and able to meet with the application of reasonable effort and diligence" (Miller, 2003, p.3). However, the applicability and importance of these standards for informing benchmarking initiatives within individual student affairs units was unknown.

Most benchmarking efforts in student affairs were observed as larger institutional studies conducted by professional organizations, institutional consortia or by private consulting firms. These efforts often presented pre-determined benchmark components available to participants. Institutions opt into project participation via their status as members or choose to purchase benchmarking rights through third party consultants.

Although process models exist, the student affairs practitioner required more information depicting how and where benchmarks may be constructed from the "bottom up" to inform the local development of efforts at the functional unit level in response to specific organizational factors, needs and environments. Incorporating the perceptions, input, feedback and ownership of staff members to be most affected by benchmarking was observed as an initial and critical consideration to such planning initiatives (Alstete, 1995; Berquist, 1992; Birk, 1997; Creamer, 1997; Dudley, 1991; Holm, 1972; McCathern, 1999; Ouimet,1998; Sherr & Teeter, 1991). Such issues magnify at the functional unit level where these factors have the greatest impact on the success and effectiveness of benchmarking (Bryan, 1996; Epper, 1999; McCatherine, 1999; Melan, 1993; Upcraft & Shuh, 1996). New concepts were needed to expand the study of appropriate student affairs benchmarks, staff perceptions, organizational culture and how other micro organizational factors may be incorporated within benchmarking efforts in the functional unit (Bender & Shuh, 2002; Kezar, 2001; Sherr & Teeter 1991).

This study was framed in a benchmarking model (Figure 1) and professional standards developed and advocated by the student affairs profession (Miller, 2003; Upcraft & Shuh, 1996). The scope of the work examined fit within the first four steps defined in the student affairs benchmarking model utilized (Upcraft & Shuh, 1996). The study analyzed data measuring staff perceptions to determine approximate improvement benchmarks derived from CAS standards. The study provided initial steps for a benchmarking project in a large University multi-campus activities program.

1. Define Problems and Issues	Scope of work, research questions and results examined in the study
2. Establish the Need for Benchmarking	
3. Decide What to Benchmark	
4. Identify Involvement	
5. Define Organizations to be Benchmarked	
6. Establish What Data or Information is needed	
7. Analyze Data or Information	
8. Adaptation	
9. Monitor the Results	
10. Assess	

Figure II.1 Student Affairs Benchmarking

(Note: adapted from Upcraft & Shuh, 1996)

C. THE INITIAL STEPS FOR BENCHMARKING PENN STATE CAMPUS ACTIVITIES PROGRAMS

While Penn State defined many centralized practices and standards for all administrative areas of the University in areas such as travel, budget and fiscal procedures; quality improvement benchmarks based upon established professional standards for the student affairs profession were needed to more clearly define specific goals, outcomes, objectives and actions for the campus activities programs functional unit. This study described the ratings of campus activities program personnel regarding the use of CAS functional unit standards as profession-defined benchmarks from which the multi-campus activities program examined could initiate the first steps of a benchmarking effort. To accomplish these outcomes, the study examined six research questions.

D. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1.   What are the perceptions of campus activities program leaders regarding the applicability of CAS components as benchmarks to improve campus activities programs?

2.   Which CAS components do campus activities program leaders perceive as the most important benchmarks to improve campus activities programs?

3.   What differences and similarities exist in CAP leader perceptions of CAS components' applicability and importance for the identification of benchmarks?

4.   How do demographic characteristics of campus activity program leaders relate to their perceptions of benchmarks?

5.   What is the level of CAP leader awareness of CAS?

6.   What benchmarks would CAP leaders suggest that are not presented in CAS?

This research was to expand and explore issues considered central to benchmarking in student affairs and extend the evolving body of research on the topic within the profession. Based upon the work of key professional organizations and leaders in the field, the inquiry provided a clearer understanding of how the first steps of a benchmarking process can be planned within campus activities programs utilizing student affairs practitioners' perceptual ratings to select quality improvement benchmarks at the functional unit level.

E. DEFINITION OF TERMS

The definitions used in the study were framed within the context of the profession, student affairs division, functional unit, and, individual staff member duties, responsibilities and job specifications.

Benchmarking: "The purpose of this process is to identify a standard against which an organization can measure and improve their way of performing some task or role" (Bryan, 1996, p. 40).

Campus Activities Program Leader: Personnel working in institutions appointed "within the administrative structure to accomplish stated missions…selected on the basis of formal education and training, relevant work experience, personal skills and competencies, relevant professional credentials, as well as potential for promoting learning and development in students, applying effective practices to educational processes, and enhancing institutional effectiveness" (Miller, 2003, p. 54).

Campus Activities Programs (CAP): "The combined efforts of clubs and organizations established for and/or by students, including, but not limited to, governance, leadership, cultural, social, diversity, recreational, artistic, political, and religious activities. Many of these efforts focus on programs that serve to educate, develop, or entertain club, organizations, or group members, their guests, and the campus community" (Miller, 2003, p.51).

Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education (CAS): "A primary purpose of the Council is to provide a forum in which representatives from higher education organizations can meet and interact for the purposes of seeking consensus on the fundamental principles of best practice that can lead to enhanced professional standards" (Miller, 2003, p. 2). The "standards are constructed to represent criteria that every higher education institution and its student support programs should be expected and able to meet with the application of reasonable effort and diligence" (p. 3).

F. ASSUMPTIONS AND LIMITATIONS

It was understood that benchmarking was a quality improvement technique which would continue to be utilized in higher education. However, a time could be envisioned in the future where conditions in higher education change in ways that would marginalize or completely eliminate it.

This research assumed that Astin's (1985) theory of involvement and the Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education standards for campus activities programs (Miller, 2003) derived from the theory were relevant and critical for organizing, understanding and assessing programs and practices in student affairs. It is understood that paradigms, theories, and standards of practice shift over time and the relevance and impact of both could be envisioned as having less importance in the future.

The study assumed that campus activities program leaders would continue to be the primary staff members through which the management and coordination of the campus activities programs will be conducted on college and university campuses. Again, forces could evolve to dramatically change the practices, scope and roles of these personnel in the higher education institution.

The method for data collection assumed that campus activities program leaders were familiar with the use of a personal computer, World Wide Web and Email to respond to the questionnaire due to the need to keep in touch with developments in the profession and to conduct administrative activities. In reality, there may be personnel who do not work within the scope of the technology needs described.

This study assumed the existence of identifiable campus activities program leaders within the system examined and in the campus activities profession as a whole due to the appointment of personnel with CAP responsibilities within respective institutions. However, less developed institutional and campus structures could be imagined wherein there would not be job definitions for personnel holding campus activities programs responsibilities.

The study assumed that the campus activities program leaders within the system examined were a representative population that had been appropriately selected. It is also assumed that quality improvement and professional development will continue to be valued and provided by organizations within higher education such as the one represented in this study. However, one can envision that staff employment within an organization does not always reflect personal beliefs since employment

and organizations are sometimes conducted in name only with little connection to larger professional or institutional values, beliefs and missions.

Finally, the study used survey research to conduct self-reporting on the information to be collected and this may not be as objective a method as can be assumed with the use of observational data. However, given the resource limitations envisioned and fit for the study and the case study group identified for the examination, it was a sound method for collection.

III. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

A. INTRODUCTION

Formats for benchmarking have evolved in higher education via the momentum of the quality

movement familiar to business and industry and continue to undergo assimilation, modification and

expanded usage.   Benchmarking, one of several premiere quality improvement techniques is

considered to be a useful planning and assessment tool but its status within higher education and

student affairs faces opportunities and challenges differing from those found in industry and

business.

Benchmarking to understand and monitor how superior standards and practices form and may

be adapted in appropriate context could provide a powerful resource for higher education units

challenged to increase productivity and quality while reducing costs. The end result of successful

benchmarking is observed as that of saving time, money and increasing quality in an area of activity

through the standardization of practices, creation of competition among participants or by generating

rapid improvement to particular organization functions. Challenging all parties to improve,

benchmarking may be observed as a particular technique worthy of expanded use within student

affairs units due to particular cultural propensities observed in the literature.

B. QUALITY MANAGEMENT, BENCHMARKING AND HIGHER EDUCATION

This section examines the evolution of the quality movement in America as it relates to higher

education. Benchmarking is observed as having evolved from within the quality movement as

a primary technique currently used in higher education. A brief historical review observes the evolution of the quality movement from the advocacy of a presidential administration to the assimilation of benchmarking as one of the critical quality techniques found in corporate America. The connection between quality initiatives, benchmarking, government and corporate America is established to understand how quality improvement techniques such as benchmarking has achieved its present status in the university and college landscape.

In September of 1983, the Reagan administration conducted the White House Conference on Productivity, a summit in which leaders from "business, labor, academia, and government" (Ruben, 2001, p.81), concluded that a national productivity award be established in conjunction with a "quality-awareness campaign at the national level in both the public and private sectors to demonstrate the importance of improving quality, productivity, and international competitiveness" (p. 81). Simultaneously, organizations such as the National Advisory Council for Quality (NACQ) and the American Productivity and Quality Center (APQC) advocated the establishment of U.S. standards to create an American quality award "similar to the Deming Prize Award in Japan" (p. 80) to promote American goods and services. The end result of these efforts saw The Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Improvement Act become law in 1987 as "the driving force of a national movement, the hub around which the wheel of quality in America turns" (p. 93). The enduring legacy of the mandate serves as a call for action in business, industry, and education sectors focused on quality improvement and productivity.

The terms "total quality management" (TQM), and "continuous quality improvement" (CQI) describe the philosophies, models, and techniques inclusive of benchmarking that agencies and organizations use to internalize much of the action and momentum of the national productivity movement (Freed, 1997, p.97). Williams (1993) cites four primary routes through which quality practices entered higher education; the membership of many university governing bodies composed of business people; business and engineering departments within universities; federal and state

governmental pressure; and, the "rapid diversification of functions of many universities" (p. 231) to meet competitive market challenges. Case studies in the1990s reported higher educations' initial adoption of quality philosophies, benchmarking and quality improvement techniques as assets for institutional reform, planning and reengineering (Clayton, 1993; Masters, 1992; Sherr, 1991).

Multiple frameworks describing actions inherent in many benchmarking models were observed in the literature. Kemper (1997) described benchmarking as a quality improvement technique with "the most-often cited, stand-alone works on benchmarking [as] Camp (1989) and Spendolini (1991)" (p. 13). Camp's (1989) book and model provide the groundwork for current efforts. This work along with other developments in the private sector at that time identified benchmarking as a widely recognized quality technique utilized in corporate America via the national acclaim Xerox received when it won the Malcolm Baldrige Award for its work.

After Xerox's won the award, benchmarking became a primary area considered in the Baldrige Award. In response to this recognition, corporate leaders and Fortune 500 companies quickly and aggressively integrated benchmarking as a critical component in their business and planning operations. Since 1989, the active use of benchmarking has continued in business, industry, and education. Watson (1993) predicted that the "future generation of benchmarking lies in a global application where international trade, cultural, and business process distinctions…are bridged and their implications for business process improvement are understood" (p. 8), with evolving needs entering the model to create its continuous unfolding.

Freed (1997) observed that the "quality principles essentially are compatible with the values of higher education" when "implemented as a system, driven by the institution's vision and mission" (p. vi) with larger, practical higher education implementations typically stalled by beliefs, assumptions and perceptions that "must change to support the principles" (p. vi). Fundamental problems that inhibit the spread of quality techniques like benchmarking in higher education may be identified as 1) the lack of assessment efforts in higher education, 2) the independence of mutual

processes across institutions, and, 3) little training available for leadership and staff on the "tools and techniques used to improve systems and processes" (p. vi). Logic for the adaptation of the quality movement philosophy in the administration and management of higher education is observed as practicing the educational values and principles institutions teach in their own classrooms (Freed, 1997, p. 141).

Wide-spread recognition and adoption of quality techniques such as benchmarking are now observed in an established administrative paradigm within higher education as evidenced by the institutional member listings provided by the National Consortium for Continuous Improvement (NCCI) which includes 54 leading American colleges and universities and eight professional higher education associations (Ruben, 2001). Sherr (1991) advocated the use of total quality management tools as ways to contain exploding operating costs and to address growing public concerns (p. 78). However, larger institutional efforts are cautioned to begin at the functional unit level. Large campus actions and leading administrators are undermined if the effort "announces the adoption of TQM principles and tools and fails to implement them successfully than for an individual office that tries and fails (Sherr, 1991, p. 77).

Williams (1993) similarly offered a balance of optimism and skepticism regarding the future of these techniques on campus. The potential of such tools were observed but they were frequently "met by uncertainty, ambiguity, skepticism, and an unwillingness to take anything on trust… [t]his distinguishing feature must constantly be borne in the mind in any attempt to transfer management concepts from other sectors of activity to higher education" (Williams, 1993, p. 234).

Debate regarding the appropriate uses of quality techniques in higher education and the arrival and proliferation of benchmarking is clearly identified. As Alstete (1995) states, "It is difficult to read an academic magazine, newspaper, or educational journal without coming upon an example of one of the many quality improvement methods such as Total Quality Management

(TQM) or Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI), Business Process Reengineering (BPR), benchmarking, and others" (p. 2).

Numerous techniques including benchmarking are referenced as defined assessment methodologies seeking answers to fundamental questions to improve quality and productivity currently in use within higher education. Freed (1997) defined these techniques as "essential for implementing the quality principles; they make it possible to collect, visualize, analyze, and interpret information to improve a process…some are useful for interpreting numerical data, while others can be applied to verbal data" (p. 88). Thus, understanding the differentiation of the measured outcomes (benchmark, standard, best practice) and process (benchmarking) become critical parts of this examination.

This section clarified the evolution and expansion of the quality movement and the emergence of benchmarking as resulting from government intervention as well as significant national efforts focused upon improving American productivity and competition globally. The quality philosophies and techniques were observed as presenting change strategies to respond to challenges by improving productivity and enhancing operations in response to growing market competition. Benchmarking was observed as a TQM technique which rapidly improves quality and productivity. Information reviewed regarding the history of the quality movement sets up a more extensive examination of the technique known as benchmarking, the primary focus of this investigation.

C. BENCHMARKS AND BENCHMARKING

This section discusses the terms "benchmarks" and "benchmarking" to provide a clearer understanding of how they are used within the dialog of quality improvement. Differences between the terms are defined to provide the foundational definitions most often referenced that describe the basics of benchmarking and cite examples of early uses of these models within corporate America.

Benchmarks are described as measurements, targets, standards or best practices used to define and compare desired performances in an organization with that of another, superior performing organization. The term "benchmarking" describes a host of processes and methodologies utilized to plan, observe, define, analyze or coordinate activities and behaviors within organizations that seek to duplicate superior performances extracted from other organizations. The literature observed benchmarking as a unique discovery and planning processes that use quantitative and qualitative information to introduce organizational improvement.

Benchmarking describes the host of definable actions, activities and processes taking place as one seeks and finds benchmarks within organizations. Benchmarking is the process of identifying, sharing, and using knowledge and best practices. It focuses on how to improve any given business process by exploiting top-notch approaches rather than merely measuring the best performance. Finding, studying and implementing best practices provide the greatest opportunity for gaining a strategic, operational, and financial advantage (APQC, 2002, Benchmarking section, para. 1).

In its most basic form, benchmarking may be found in learning predispositions that cause humans to seek better ways to do things so as not to reinvent the wheel. Balm (1992) asserted that examples and methods of benchmarking are found throughout history in areas such as ancient military tactical decisions, with current efforts sharing similarities with more modern business concepts such as competitive and industry analysis. Watson (1992) described the evolution of benchmarking in America emerging as "work on the application of the scientific method of business' (p. 5) that "had encouraged comparison of work processes" (p. 5) in the 1800's and, later, after World War II. As American culture and products flowed into Japan during the 1950's, Japanese businesses began to create systems for adapting American business practices to minimize time required to implement improvements (Watson, 1992). Benchmarking was defined as an analysis "process for measuring your company's method, process, procedure product and service performance against those companies that consistently distinguish themselves in that same category of

performance" (Watson, 1992, p. 5). Evolving generations build on efforts first seen in industry

models such as Xerox Corporation's effort in the 1980s. The most common components found

within benchmarking models today may be viewed as sharing specific themes based upon

recognizable planning frameworks designed to achieve desired organizational change and outputs

through application. Bogan & English (1994) discuss the benchmarking actions of academic,

corporate and industry leaders to observe specific benchmarking models with definitions that

describe suitability, selection, and the benefits of specific types of benchmarking based upon

specified organizational needs for learning and improvement.

     Similar to describing overarching themes and methods customarily seen within

benchmarking models, Patterson (1996) asserted that the Plan, Do, Check, Act (PDCA) cycle

familiar to Total Quality Management may also be utilized as a framework for understanding

benchmarking activities. The PDCA cycle illustrates how organizations may develop rapid learning

and adaptation techniques through four steps as "1) Planning what you will do and how it will be

evaluated, 2) Doing what you plan, 3) Checking outcomes and learning from results, and, 4) Taking

action based upon what has been learned" (Joiner, 1994, p. 44).

     The first basic and most often referenced model is Camp's (1989) work extracted from the

experience of Xerox Corporation's revolutionary benchmarking of L.L. Bean's item distribution

system to improve customer satisfaction. The model was presented as a ten-step model introduced

within the industry:

> 1) identifying what to benchmark, 2) identifying whom to emulate, 3) planning and collecting
> data on the comparison company, 4) establishing the current "gaps" between the competitor's
> performance and the home organization, 5) establishing future levels for performance, 6)
> communicating the research findings organizationally, 7) establishing performance goals, 8)
> creating action plans that establish work to be completed, 9) monitoring and evaluating
> progress to close the gaps in performance, 10) reevaluating the benchmarks for improvement.
> (Camp, 1989, p. 19-22)

     Another often-referenced model is Spendolini's (1992) description of benchmarking in

corporate experiences, which are similar to Camp (1989) and consist of determining what to

benchmark, forming a team, identifying partners, collecting and analyzing benchmarking information, and, taking action (Spendolini, 1992). Thus, benchmarking was defined in the context of a project plan with unique actions, competencies and critical needs for success found within an identifiable plan construction. Also highlighting case studies and operations from industry, Karol (1995) identified benchmarking to describe the actions and activities inherent in most models with descriptive factors sharing similar focus on organizational self-examination with the end result being a comparative project focused upon gathering and analyzing very specific information for improvement followed by actively planning and monitoring change based upon the information gathered.

While benchmarking models evolve and change within the various environments in which they are applied, one critical need may remain constant; businesses must adapt and change in order to survive in competitive and changing markets. Zairi (1996) observed this survival need as a basis for corporate innovation defining benchmarking as critical to plan knowledge transfer to support focus, operations, customer service, process, and the culture of the organization to ensure organization competitiveness in the future.

This section described the difference between the term "benchmark" and "benchmarking" as well as provided definitions for the terms to create an understanding of the behaviors and activities described when referring to the technique. Several types of benchmarking may identified based upon the benefits an organization seeks related to specific project outcomes or objectives. The next section examines a range of specific models often found in the literature to further expand understanding.

D. BENCHMARKING MODELS

This section introduces several benchmarking models commonly referenced in the literature. The methods discussed are considered to be typical and often utilized in response to a given organizational need or partner relationship. Information will also describe levels or layers of organizational involvement required to conduct benchmarking.

The foundations for benchmarking may be described as the planning of comparisons within the scope of specified relationships to the meet defined needs and outcomes. These comparative relationships are most often described as specific formats for benchmarking focusing on 1) internal operations, 2) external competitors, 3) functional/process operations, 4) generic processes (Camp, 1989), and, 5) strategic objectives (Bogan & English, 1994).

Internal benchmarking looks within one's own organization to match operations across departments or units to find superior performances within the organization to provide sources for improving performance through cross-unit cooperation, comparative measure, intelligence and innovation for adaptation that, "may in and of itself provide useful information…even define an internal operation that is the benchmark" (Camp, 1989, p. 62).

External, or competitive benchmarking uses the competition as partners in comparative studies within a given industry or area of work to produce results by examining the standards and practices in the area of work to be examined. Most often, when surveying across a given industry, the leader in a given endeavor is identifiable due to their place at the "top" of a given field. It is this analysis of specific performances exhibited by the competitor that drives the improvement efforts of most other peers in that field. In many instances, these trade secrets are the reason by which the superior performing organization is considered to be the leader in a given field and obtaining such information is difficult but "comparing methods, practices and processes in a structured fashion has created interest for this type…for the success is that other parties are also interested in understanding

best practices that make their operations successful or could improve them further" (Camp, 1989, p. 63).

Functional benchmarking may be described as looking at a specific product, service or process and searching for innovations regardless of the industry or source from which the comparison will be drawn. Also described as generic process benchmarking, "this form…seeks to identify the most effective operating practices from many companies that perform similar work functions" (Bogan & English, 1994, p. 7), to target improvement of that specified area. Similarly, "generic benchmarking looks to the same functions, performances or roles regardless of the dissimilarities of the industry" (Camp, 1989, p. 65), to find distinct processes such as invoicing, filing, and database systems sharing the same requirements for execution regardless the industry and organization in which they take place. To inform activities to be conducted, process and functional benchmarking activities may also arise as "reverse engineering, direct product or service comparisons and analysis of operating statistics [as] primary techniques applied" (Bogan & English, 1994, p. 8), to discover why and how a particular practice is successful.

Adding to this understanding of benchmarking models, Bogan and English (1994) expanded the notion of gathering external intelligence seen in both competitive and generic benchmarking into a broader scope to define strategic benchmarking as a study that investigates standards and practices "seeking to identify winning strategies that enable high-performing companies to be successful in their marketplaces" (p. 8). This strategic need to excel in quality to remain competitive and successful provides the impetus that moves benchmarking from corporations and industry into the non-profit arena and education.

This section identified commonly referenced types of benchmarking used in industry and corporate America. Building on this information, the next section will create an understanding of how benchmarking has been applied and grown within non-profit organizations in order to explore its ongoing evolution into education.

E. BENCHMARKING IN THE NON-PROFIT SECTOR AND EDUCATION

This section explores how benchmarking continues to evolve, moving from the corporate sector into

the non-profit arena. It will examine the changing nature of benchmarking as it has adapted to meet

the unique needs associated with the non-profit sector and educational institutions. Issues of

organizational culture will be introduced to describe challenges facing the technique as it moves

between the sectors.

Benchmarking models budding from Camp's (1989) work moved the technique into Fortune

500 companies and later into the educational sector along with other quality techniques. Unlike the

rapid assimilation of benchmarking into industrial culture via the Baldrige Awards' standardization,

the non-profit and educational sectors find unique challenges for benchmarking due to the fact that

non-profit needs and objectives often focus on outcomes other than the financial bottom line or a

specific product. Goals in non-profits are often based upon more altruistic concepts such as serving

the greater public good with much different funding models and unique, localized, organization

cultures.

Industry and business benchmarking efforts may be more easily defined as standardizations

established to recognize bottom lines like income versus expense, product specifications or supply

and demand relationships. However, non-profit and educational outcomes, while different from

industry, may be defined in the context of metrics. Losh (1994) illustrated a host of broad potential

educational benchmarks defined as discrete and a measurable end products as the result of an

educational process as is the case in manufacturing. The transition, context and application of

metrics in education settings may be simplified.

> The use of the term 'metrics' in this context is not familiar… Metrics, as used in
> benchmarking does not refer to units of measure in the metric measurement system such as
> meters or grams. Metrics, most simply stated, are those things that are to be measured in a
> performance (competency based) system. Although quantification for comparative purposes
> is a major activity in a benchmarking system…there are caveats. Although experts' caution
> that benchmarking is not synonymous with measuring, the issue of what to measure is clearly
> one of the thorniest problems confronting would be benchmarkers. (Losh, 1994, p. 4)

While seeking quantitative benchmarks is a critical part of benchmarking, the need within the

non-profit and educational sectors to incorporate more human issues and assets into the expanding

scope of benchmarking arises as the challenge to transfer and translate more qualitative

standardizations as best practice knowledge and quality standards critical to organizational

performances. Fitz-enz (1997) observes knowledge producing organizations such as higher

education as "totally dependent on human actions" (p. 6) in which they must consider the "most

powerful and distinguishing asset[s]…its people" (p. 6) in any benchmarking effort.

This need to focus on human factors, performances and organization personnel together is

echoed as benchmarking increases in use among people-based organizations.

> Companies that have failed to benefit from their benchmarking efforts tend to overlook a
> basic prerequisite: quality preparedness…the effectiveness of any benchmarking activity is
> still greatly dependent on the basic quality skills: interpersonal communication (which
> support team activities), problem-solving and decision-making methods, simple statistical
> methods for data analysis and graphical display, and knowledge of these basis skills, is in
> fact, a requirement for conducting a successful benchmarking study, it is not a substantial
> enough basis from which to begin. (Watson,1993, p. 40)

As specific sets of standards, practices and outcomes considered critical to organizational

success are translated into educational settings, the next generation of benchmarking in education

refers to as professional standards and best practices as a primary source of organizational

intelligence gathering. While much definition is still needed to clarify a comprehensive

understanding of best practices, Keehly (1997) provides a broad description identifying it as: "1)

anything better than your current practice, 2) something declared as such by the media or other

relevant organization, and, 3) an award-winning success" (p. 26). Expanding this concept, standards

and best practices outcomes "1) prove success over time, 2) show quantifiable results, 3) receive

recognition by peers as creative and innovative, 4) establish positive outcomes/indicators if

quantifiable results are limited, 5) are easily replicated with modifications, 6) hold stature as critical

to organization improvement, and, 7) find transferability to another organization regardless of demographics" (p. 26).

Benchmarking in education based institutions conducted to produce outcomes are often navigated through the utilization of descriptive standards or best practice analysis to narrate how things may be done to achieve goals through a focused research process seeking change through innovation, analysis, and, transfer of knowledge. This was observed as Tucker (1996) adapted benchmarking for educational environments by transferring quality improvement concepts into an educator-focused dialog reducing jargon, simplifying activities, and communicating benchmarking techniques for the broader consumption and application among educators. Describing other positive educational applications of benchmarking, Resnick (1995) advocated its use to identify educational best practices, partners, tools and processes for reform in the United States through comparisons of educational policy, goals, standards and issues to join U.S. educational standards with some of the best educational models in the world. In this way, benchmarking was viewed as a specialized asset to establish comparative research for educational improvement with new processes, procedures, policies and results attained from informed.

While potentials may seem to be very positive for a next generation of benchmarking in educational arenas, problems inherited with the application of business models into educational settings may be a consideration. Kaufman (1998) advises non-profit organizations to first understand their vision as well as the negative impacts and implications of using financial bottom lines as benchmark criteria when examining services intended to serve the public. Identifying potential pitfalls found in educational benchmarking models, Kaufman (1998) observes administrators can avoid problems by: " 1) benchmarking useful educational models, 2) assur[ing] that the processes and procedures benchmarked will be appropriate for your educational institution, 3) have confidence that your benchmarking performance model…[and] organization are headed in the right direction in the first place" (p. 13).

With the movement of benchmarking into non-profit and educational settings, techniques for benchmarking observe an increasing focus upon issues such as organization politics, cultures and staff member competencies and perceptions when applied in these organizations. This expanding focus upon human assets and more descriptive understandings of standards and best practices as benchmarks to inform performances beyond quantitative metrics may create the underpinning for new translations of benchmarking for higher education to manage challenge and change.

This section examined how the non-profit sector has adapted more human factors as considerations within the growing definition of benchmarking. With the augmentation of new definitions and the further integration of benchmarking into people-based organizations such as educational institutions, a specific discussion of its evolution within higher education was required.

F. BENCHMARKING IN HIGHER EDUCATION

This section examines current practices and uses of benchmarking within the higher education environment. Articles, reports, recommendations and case study information are presented with arguments made for and against the expanded use of the benchmarking in higher education.

Advocacy and positive perceptions regarding the use of benchmarking in higher education are found within the literature promoting both its use and suitability the environment. Further exploration of reports and results evolving from benchmarking projects and administrative case studies indicated more about prevailing perceptions regarding the suitability of the technique and its applications on campus. New iterations of benchmarking required understanding how it is evolving in the higher education.

Penn States' Teaching and Learning Consortium (TLC) was identified as an innovative benchmarking effort constructed of teams of faculty, department heads, and students. Bender and Shuh (2002) report members "discuss the teaching and learning process from their various

perspectives and gather and share best pedagogical practices" (p. 75). These best practices are then shared in an internal benchmarking project Web site (PSU, 2003). Similarly identifying shared best practices as a core outcome, Ellibee and Mason (1997) recommend benchmarking as a key to improving the quality of knowledge transfer. Emphasizing the need to incorporate standards into efforts, positive outcomes to benchmarking "[c]onducted collaboratively, by a broad range of practitioners…generates a shared, in depth understanding of local practices through identification of specific objectives, critical reflection, a focus on strengths and weaknesses, and the adoption of best practices" to impact change (p. 16).

Bollag (1999) observed information on positive outcomes to explore new ways of financing and operating higher education as the institutions used benchmarking to share technological spin-offs. Successes from the Consortium of Innovative Universities benchmarking project reportedly linked universities with similar missions, forming strategic alliances and pooling resources to increase the quality of university academic and administrative functions to the benefit of all participants by creating collegial competition to drive quality improvement to "get more money to do both traditional activities and new ones" (p. A50).

Identifying improved institutional performance when budget resources are predicated upon benchmarking outcomes, Lively (1999) observed a funding system that allocated resources based on the partnering efforts among Florida universities as a success story. In such systems reward and productivity measures to increase quality were reinforced through comparisons to "best in class" colleges in the system and making steps to close identified performance gaps. As reported by the senior vice-president of the National Association of College and University Business Officers, "[o]ne of the major issues campuses struggle with is assessing academic productivity…there is a lot of attention devoted to it, but very few solutions are identified. This [The University of Florida's Bank] is one application that…has practical implications" (Lively, 1999, p. A35).

Brewer (1996) described positive outcomes from benchmarking conducted in an initiative examining institutions varying in size and purpose to establish best practices in areas of management, marketing, and political purposes. Comparisons indicated "[w]here it can be determined that two similar institutions have notable differences, further exploration may reveal which practice is more successful in terms of service to the student and continued feasibility for an institution. At that point, clearer comparisons may be drawn for the purposes of benchmarking…" (p. 10). Results suggested that encouraging outcomes may be achieved from benchmarking even when significant differences exist among partner participants.

Also supporting the need to seek differences among benchmarking partners, McGregor and Attinasi (1998) observed the selection of peer partners as critical aspects of benchmarking to ensure not only the use of similar peer institutions, but also seeking comparisons among dissimilar colleges with identified best practice models. In this way, dissimilar institutions are seen as playing "a critical role in deciding the future of new programs and the modifications of current ones" (p. 17) as they may introduce radical reengineering concepts into educational institutions.

Clinch (1996) examined positive outcomes found in an extensive review of qualitative information extracted from benchmarking examining university economic impact through university technology transfer.   In the study, root causes of top performances were seen as resulting from the development of proactive standards, policies and guidelines adopted at superior performing institutions that enabled and supported best practice performances (Clinch, 1996).   In a similar examination of a best practice model informing decision-making at four-year colleges and universities, Birk's (1997) analysis of study methodologies via document reviews, site visits, and personal interviews with administrators targeted critical benchmarking performances. Cultural issues, involving key personnel and establishing commitment on behalf of the institution are identified were key components for success.

Presenting a qualitative examination conducted through field research in the application of Total Quality Management (TQM) in higher education practice, Rux (1994) concluded that higher education would be improved through the benchmarking of systems from other best practice institutions or applying private industry models to critical operations. Similarly focusing on benchmarking in educational systems McCathern (1999) recommended higher education institutions embarking on projects should follow some simple guidelines to ensure success:

> Have a basic TQM culture
> Assign a trained team to oversee the project
> Train and support administrators and critical personnel before embarking
> Ensure participants institutions feel included in the process
> Commit a year to conducting and utilizing benchmark data
> Conduct gap analysis for any reports
> Have anyone trained in the process be involved in evaluating the final report
> Distribute the final report widely across campus
> Ensure the application and refinement of information collected is happening
> (McCathern, 1999, p. 77)

While many examples regarding benchmarking illustrate successful case studies and espouse positive participant perceptions regarding efforts conducted in higher education, Epper (1999) contends that benchmarking is not a new concept for college and universities.

> In many ways, and perhaps without realizing it, colleges and universities have always engaged in benchmarking. We have long compared ourselves to our peers while aspiring to greater levels of enrollment, funding, recognition, and prestige. The widely publicized and often criticized-but always captivating national rankings weigh heavily on our institutional egos. And we have a strong tradition of knowledge sharing carried out through national meetings, publications, list serves, and other venues. It is not a wonder then that in learning of yet another quality management tool, administrators often respond: 'We've been doing benchmarking for years. We just did not call it that. (p. 24)

The review of case study and consortium information recognized that there is not one clear model or a specified institutional strategy through which benchmarking in higher education may be conducted. Literature presented in this section provided generalized opinions, information and examples of benchmarking and various authors' thoughts related to the expanded need for benchmarking in higher education. The information asserted a theory and practice base in the literature and identified it as an area for continued study within higher education. This created a

position for the technique beyond that of an administrative fad on American campuses. A refined focus on the literature to ascertain current benchmarking innovations in higher education via a review of institutional approaches, consortia actions and scholarly thought on the topic was essential to this inquiry.

G. INSTITUTIONAL APPROACHES TO BENCHMARKING

This section explored the future of benchmarking in higher education in a discussion of evolving definitions in university culture. Its growth and evolving definition as an active technique in use within organizations and networks in higher education is explored. Recent models and technological innovations impacting benchmarking were reviewed to display contemporary applications and definitions as well as provide recent scholarly insights.

Bender and Shuh (2002) observed that, "[t]he paradigm of comparison and information sharing in organizational development has found its way into other organizational settings such as health care, human resource management, and in academia…" to depict benchmarking as a core of organizational theory and practice that describe institutional learning practices gathered from "contexts outside an organization's usual frame of reference" (p. 8-9). Through defined methods identifying standards and conducting the gathering of information, benchmarking is identified as one of three most significant evaluation trends among boards of state higher education for assessing institutional performance (Bender & Shuh, 2002).

> Governing board members, perhaps more than any segment of the college community, including students, conduct the greatest amount of informal benchmarking. Using personal networks and reading about practices at other institutions in the popular press, they often champion institutional changes to mirror the efforts that are undertaken at colleges and universities that they perceive to be more prestigious or more forward-looking. (p. 118)

The broadening definition, scope and impact of benchmarking in higher education follows Fitz-enz's (1993) work challenging the notion that only quantitative, metric-based measures such as

those found in the corporate sector can be used. More recent definitions describe benchmarking in different models in environments outside the traditions of industry. As new practices emerged the analysis of benchmarking itself grows within higher education with the term pointing to the importance of qualitative best practices findings.

Bender & Shuh (2002) observed new iterations of benchmarking in higher education as "concepts that reflect the systems theory philosophy of benchmarking in higher education methods demonstrating interdependence, holism, and environmental influences" (p. 9). Varieties of institutional learning practices such as reports and research describing professional standards, lessons learned, understanding decision making processes and conducting surveys that seek information which identifies best practice comparisons now fit the evolving definition of benchmarking. In a new framework, Bender and Shuh (2002) observe the "Micro-Macro Link" (p. 10) to recognize benchmarking taking place in varied contexts within the higher education environment.

> Thus, benchmarking can refer to comparisons at various levels. It can be used to refer to rather superficial comparisons such as how many times phones should be allowed to ring before they are answered in a service center (which are highly situation-specific), to processes through which organization assessment is conducted (which are more generic and transferable). This helps explain differences in perspectives regarding the value of benchmarking and also points to an important theoretical and pragmatic concern for organizations that wish to undertake the practice. (Bender & Shuh, 2002, p.10)

Institutional studies of relational issues and semantic networks within higher education illustrate such new benchmarking frameworks. While these efforts are not always explicitly identified as benchmarking they "have profound impact on organization level survival, growth, and innovation…they are organizational assessments that emphasize and document (benchmark) the driving processes that facilitate thriving organizational practice" (Bender & Shuh, p.11). The use of large institutional efforts in conjunction with micro assessments of functional units joins together macro and micro techniques to understand internal and external factors affecting "institutional practices and policies" (p. 42). Bender and Shuh (2002) asserted the use of dependent and independent assessments in functional units are critical to ensure individual unit symmetry within

both the broader profession and the individual institution. Using benchmarks at both levels focused on quality themes create the "balanced scorecard" (p. 18) as organization standards and qualitative performances ensure functional units are running together under the intended professional and institutional headings.

Recent technological innovations via the World Wide Web provide higher education with possibilities for benchmarking never before available via the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS). The Web site (IPEDS, 2003) features data collected from 9,900 post secondary institutions and eliminates much of the labor intensive data gathering requirements normally associated with traditional benchmarking methodologies. Advantages to the system are viewed as its broad scope and range of institutional participants; the fact that federal mandates require data submission from institutions into the system; the large number of institutional variables available for peer group comparisons; the availability of salient definitions for instruments to be used within the peer group; the turn around time for data is viewed as fast when compared to traditional benchmarking methods; and the broad availability of longitudinal data found within the system (Shuh, 2002, pp. 33-37).

The majority of current literature evolving from examinations of institutional or consortia approaches, "seems to relate to faculty interests and issues--teaching, benefits, salaries, tenure and promotion, research, library resources, faculty development, and building academic strength within the department" (p. 77). The lack of a particular body of information focusing on benchmarking in student affairs functional areas points to the need for greater understanding the current state of its use in the environment.

This section introduced recent discussion on consortia efforts and scholarly examinations of the current and future states of benchmarking in higher education. New concepts were presented as approaches to benchmarking identify challenges and opportunities for higher education to meet growing demands and external pressures. While not discussed in detail, the administrative area of

student affairs was observed as an important area for future research as a defined area for examination regarding current use of benchmarking within the evolving definition in higher education.

H. BENCHMARKING IN STUDENT AFFAIRS

This section presents perspectives from leading authorities in the field of student affairs via research and opinion offered on benchmarking in the profession. Additionally, recent innovative efforts in student affairs will be reviewed to create an understanding of new benchmarking initiatives affecting student life areas.

While student affairs spin-off models emerged from earlier institutional efforts conducted, unit specific benchmarking was infrequently seen in the literature. Anecdotal observations viewed students and their families as experienced with informal benchmarking as "[p]rospective students compare carefully the quality of service that an institution provides, remember which school s answered telephones cheerfully an returned e-mails in a prompt fashion…" (p. 117). Students reportedly continue these methods of evaluation as they assimilate within the institution, comparing many areas.

> From the menus and facilities of the dining halls to student life programming…student government leaders have always gathered reams of data about other institutions and provided those data to administrators in attempts to influence the practices of their own institutions. Astute administrators can use this practice to the advantage of the institution by training students in the art of effective benchmarking. (p. 118)

Such generalized observations seemed to set the stage for benchmarking in student affairs by describing stakeholder perceptions of the college campus. The proposition created a challenge for the student affairs practitioner to go beyond anecdotal commentary to establish a quantifiable inquiry and body of knowledge regarding student life issues and activities as the basis for this assessment.

Building upon the notions that student affairs is predisposed and familiar with benchmarking, Upcraft and Shuh (1996) call upon members of the profession to learn and utilize benchmarking.

> There is a time-honored tradition in student affairs of consulting with other institutions when confronted with a particular issue or problem. We do this primarily because we want to benefit from the wisdom and success of others so that we don't have to 'reinvent the wheel.' If others have solved a problem similar to ours successfully, we want to benefit from their experience, and, if we are lucky, save ourselves the time and agony implementing untried approaches. (p. 240)

While little information was found examining knowledge, predispositions or perceptions of student affairs personnel regarding benchmarking, some research efforts conducted in student affairs seem to describe and exhibit positive experiences. Ouimet's (1998) study of perceptions of student quality of life in several areas based upon the research of key theoretical leaders in student affairs provided an affirming basis for benchmarking student affairs through comparisons among large research institutions as well as advocating the need for expanding its use in functional areas. Similarly observing student affairs as a particular area for expanded inquiry, Creamer's (1997) study of organization management and awareness of quality techniques among higher education administrators in student life areas found benchmarking identified as one of four most reported and utilized techniques with qualitative benchmarking techniques perceived more favorably than quantitative for decision-making.

Mosier and Schwarzmueller (2002) asserted that more benchmarking was needed in student affairs units to understand and plan the student's campus experience, conduct assessment and self-study, and as a basis for policy analysis. While benchmarking projects in traditional student affairs areas have "accelerated during the 1990s" (p. 104) with the advent of the NACUBO Benchmarking Project and the NACUFS Customer Satisfaction Benchmarking Survey, specific functional unit projects have appeared. For-profit consultant firms have partnered with major student affairs professional organizations to create projects focused on topical survey research at selected institutions across the country (Mosier & Schwarzmueller, 2002, p.112). One of the most critical

drivers influencing current benchmarking efforts in student affairs functional units has been initiated and promoted by Educational Benchmarking Incorporated (EBI, 2004). As such, EBI claims that it "has developed a revolutionary approach to benchmarking specifically oriented to education… to provide evidence of enhanced performance, efficiency and quality with fewer resources" (Educational Benchmarking Incorporated, para. 1, 2004).

In one such EBI partnership driving several efforts, the Association of College and University Housing Officers (ACUHO), and EBI created several student affairs benchmarking studies focused on housing issues, resident satisfaction, and resident assistant content areas (EBI, 2004). Outcomes observed from the joint projects pointed to critical successes as: partnering with a for-profit organization enabling quick delivery and management of survey and data; active response to stakeholder feedback; involving student affairs personnel in the design and review to ensure users needs and applicability; few improved outputs would have evolved quickly if not for the leadership and ownership of the project on behalf of ACUHO-I; and regular and ongoing communication between EBI and ACUHO-I were viewed as critical success factors (Mosier & Schwarzmueller, 2002).

Since the creation of the EBI/ACUHO-I benchmarking project, offerings have expanded to include the student affairs functional areas of Greek Life and student union operations with the Association of College Unions International (ACUI). The ACUI reports comparisons from "tens of thousands of users of college union services, activities, and facilities from participating colleges and universities nationwide" (Requested EBI informational brochure, February, 2003). In a broader effort, EBI and The Policy Center on the First Year of College, created the First-Year Initiative Benchmarking Survey to examine overall first-year student learning and satisfaction in several critical areas of student life as it "assesses the learning outcomes of first-year seminars – a core part of the first-year experience at over 70% of institutions of higher education in America…information that institutions can use to manage improvement or confirm current practice" (First Year Initiative

Benchmarking Survey, 2003). As such, the survey examined traditional student life areas of study habits, engagement in the classroom, relationships with faculty and staff, competency in academic abilities, academic planning, time management, use of campus resources, peer relationships, involvement in co-curricular life, awareness of strengths and weaknesses, maintenance of personal wellness, interaction with people of different races/cultures, satisfaction with FY seminar, institution and demographic characteristics (First Year Initiative Benchmarking Survey, 2003).

The First Year Initiative (FYI) is a clearly identified study focusing on developing comparative data and content it is derived from The Cooperative Institutional Research Program (CIRP). CIRP is "the nation's largest and oldest empirical study of higher education…regarded as the most comprehensive source of information on college students. The annual report of the CIRP Freshman Survey provides normative data on each year's entering college students" (CIRP, 2003). CIRP provides broad comparative student data benchmarks as "detailed profile of their entering freshman class, as well as national normative data for students in similar types of institutions (e.g., public four-year colleges, moderately selective Protestant colleges, highly selective Catholic colleges, public two-year colleges)" (CIRP, 2003).

More recent developments aimed at affecting the overall discussion and practice of benchmarking in student affairs produced advocacy efforts extending from the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) as reported by the American College Personnel Association (Kuh, 2003). The NSSE evolved in response to popular consumer-focused benchmarks such as those presented in the U.S. News & World Report. The growing popularity of the US News and similar reports prompted action within higher education and student life areas to develop student-focused benchmarks targeting the overall campus environment. Kuh (2003) described this benchmarking movement and more recent actions in an interview with the ACPA Senior Scholar.

> Many college presidents were becoming increasingly concerned with the attention given to US News and other college rankings because they were neither accurate nor useful indicators of quality in undergraduate education. So, in the late 1990's the Pew Charitable Trust hosted

a series of meetings, and one outcome was a recommendation that getting valid, reliable information directly from students about the nature of their experiences would be extremely useful for several purposes. The NSSE was the result. (p. 10)

The development of the NSSE and its student centered benchmarks seek "a common language to talk about these important matters…engaging people in conversations about learning-centered practices" (Kuh, 2003, p.13). One envisioned outcome was that of helping an institution to conduct internal assessment to improve through the use of specialized indexes and then linking institutions as they seek solutions and best practice models through partner information and resources provided via the NSSE website.

Historic and current practices and standards observed in student affairs point to the increasing growth of benchmarking within the profession. However, less is known about future evolutions, administrator skills, and specific functional unit requirements that may enable or undermine efforts. As more research, understanding and support regarding benchmarking evolves within student affairs, the profession may see assimilation trends similar to those observed in other professional areas. Standards of practice may be forged as has been observed when the corporate sector and higher education professional organizations engaged in management, direction and advocacy efforts. As such, potentials for benchmarking assimilation within student affairs may be of increasing importance within the daily work of the practitioner.

The literature reviewed in this section clarified several efforts and practices in higher education as benchmarking evolves in definition, scope and use. The next section presents a specific definition and model of benchmarking developed for student affairs.

I. BENCHMARKING DEFINITION AND MODEL FOR STUDENT AFFAIRS

Few specific definitions or models of benchmarking for student affairs appeared within the literature. The purpose of this section is to provide better definition and a specific model of benchmarking for student affairs areas which may be explored as a basis for informing its use.

A critical definition for understanding benchmarking in student affairs areas is found as Bryan (1996) states:

> The purpose of this process is to identify a standard against which an organization can measure and improve their way of performing some task or role. For instance, a student affairs department might identify a similar department that performs top-notch new student orientation activities. They can then closely examine how this exemplary department can offer such outstanding programming. (p. 40)

Similarly, Upcraft and Shuh (1996) asserted that benchmarking identifies best practices to "improve products, services, or processes…" (p. 240). The authors (Upcraft & Shuh, 1996) further defined a specific benchmarking model for student affairs as ten steps (p. 243-250).

Step One: Define the problems and issues with the discovery of those factors affecting the nature of the work in the area to be examined. Both internal and external forces may affect operations and may be identified through studies or other assessments. Sources of external intelligence include entities and organizations such as community, state, and federal governing bodies, legislative bodies and actions, and professional organization directions and existing professional standards. Formal information may be located in resources like existing reports, studies, and other institutional documents that point to strengths and weaknesses. Informal sources of information might also include meetings with campus stakeholders such as staff, alumni, parents, faculty, students, and administrators.

Step Two: Establish the needs for benchmarking through an assessment and interpretation of information collected identifying the problems, issues to establish whether or not benchmarking is actually needed. Once benchmarking is identified as appropriate, other critical decisions should establish internal support and project ownership prior to embarking.

Step Three: Decide what to benchmark and make choices about what areas to benchmark. Clarify the product, service, standards, practices, process, and/or functions to be examined and the comparisons to be involved in the project. Identification of the scope of the work involved as well as internal resources required should frame project expectations for delivery of envisioned outcomes. In this step, "[i]t is important to know what is being benchmarked, and why" (p. 244).

Step Four: Identify involvement, roles and expectations for who may be involved describe the requirements for participation. This involves the identification of "staff who deal directly with the problem…those closest to the customer" (p. 244). Also, it is critical to ensure that these staff members have been involved in the process as "there will be greater ownership of the results and a greater likelihood that solutions will be implemented" (p. 245). The leader of this effort "should come from the unit or discipline that is the subject of the effort" (p. 245).

Step Five: Determine organizations to be benchmarked via external scanning for superior partners through research of literature, associations, interviews and surveys. Once potentials are identified, reputations and the quality of the outputs sought should be examined in the context of the reliability of the partner's reputation in relation to the data to be examined as well as their experience. Cultural and practical considerations should address the partners' demographic fit and the feasibility of the partnership given any location, logistic and financial challenges.

Step Six: Establish what Data or information is needed to achieve measurements needed to critically evaluate the performances, processes, products, services or functions to be examined. Clarify qualitative and quantitative sources of data needed to establish the methodology to be utilized in the harvesting of information internally and externally with the partner.

Step Seven: Analyze the data or information within the established frameworks to understand issues relative to the "home" organization performances, processes, products, services or functions. Employ a consistent method to produce the data from the partner using means such as phone interviews, site visits, surveys, and data archives to conduct the harvest. Understand and identify

why, how, what, and where differences exist between home and the partners' superior performance. Identify and address any misinformation or incongruence within the data collected. Define best practices as the performances that support the superior performances identified. Define the critical success factors needed at home to bridge the gap with desired performance. This information should "include specific recommendations and solutions which address specific problems" (p. 249).

Step Eight: Adapt by understanding home culture and organizational barriers observed for implementation of best practices. Develop action plans for the execution of envisioned changes and modifications. Apply best practices in the context of home culture adjusting to fit "apples to apples" approaches with regard to factors such as staffing and resources. Consider establishing a pilot-test of the adaptations and practices before engaging in broader applications.

Step Nine: Monitor the results to ensure that imports and adaptations are installed according to the plan. Establish meaningful assessments that determine whether or not envisioned changes in response to the problems and issues identified are actually occurring. Evaluate success as useful information addressing the problems and issues identified. Report the information among stakeholders.

Step Ten: Assess and answer the questions that ask whether or not the envisioned changes/outcomes for the standards, performances, processes, products, services or functions involved have actually occurred and in what ways. Generate recommendations and describe what additional learning is needed in response to what has been envisioned. If needed, adjust measures to continue monitoring the actions initiated. If the project has not resolved or improved the home organization relevant to the issues and problems identified, restart the process.

J. BENCHMARKING GROWTH IN HIGHER EDUCATION

The growth of professional standards, organizational advocacy and trends in the literature on the topic of benchmarking in student affairs observed it as a rapidly emerging focal point in American higher education. As such, it is important to place these growth efforts within the context of the larger college and university environment. This section reviews the impact of the quality movement and benchmarking on the climate of higher education. Internal and external factors impacting the need for higher education to expand efforts such as benchmarking as a strategy for institutional change and improvement are explored.

In response to challenges posed by increased calls from legislative bodies and the public for more accountability due to changing federal and state economies as well as increasing competition among institutions, benchmarking may be viewed as one strategy to plan and monitor factors required for higher education to respond to such concerns. As demonstrated in the private sector, benchmarking to exceed the competition and become the best-in-class may fit well with many college and university vision statements and "may be viewed by faculty and campus administration as more compatible to their missions (which often include phrases about excellence in teaching, research, and service) and less benign than quantitative 'bean-counting' indicators" (Bender & Shuh, 2002, p.101).

Advocacy efforts in higher education suggested there are many best practice models that "abound in education…[t]here is no shortage of good ideas about what to do to improve. But the fact is these best practices are not spreading. In addition, best practices that exist in business, healthcare, and government that could be useful in education--are not being used" (APQC, 2002). The American Productivity and Quality Center (APQC) oversees the Baldrige in Education Initiative (BiE IN), an effort to expand applications to "help…education organization[s] use the Baldrige framework to support and direct continuous improvement. Through assessment, training, and

facilitation, [institutions] can improve student achievement and organizational performance...[to] attain measurable improvements in processes, systems, and people" (APQC, 2002).

Observing this type of innovation as new planning strategies for dealing with the need for change in higher education, Rowley (1997) observed markets and competition as forcing higher education away from a purely internal focus to that of an external, customer-based sensitivity focused upon the need to monitor and assess planning and decisions to provide "better service, lower costs, higher quality, and a mix of products that satisfies their own [the institution's] sense of what a good education ought to provide" (p. 55). These changing needs were mirrored as Fram and Camp (1995) observe "there is also a growing dissatisfaction and frustration with spiraling college costs and undergraduate teaching practices. In addition, there is a concern about the value of a degree as a credential for career advancement when the biggest headlines in the national job scene are about downsizing, restructuring and personnel layoffs" (p. 69).

External factors such as growing competition and the need for cost reduction in higher education observed the development of consumer driven markets wherein potential students and families begin "shopping" higher education for products. Illustrating this point, The U.S. News & World Report is very popular among the college-seeking public via its annual listing of "Best Colleges and Universities" in the United States. The report provided cross-institution comparisons on consumer-focused benchmarks developed by the magazine.

Gose (1999) asserted that there are significant problems with the report. Though an easily referenced resource among individuals and families looking for colleges and universities, the benchmarks analyzed ignore more valid means of establishing institutional comparisons based upon the quality of education. Contending that the report is not predicated on educational quality indicators, changes envision new benchmarks in response to continued demand for institutions to focus on increasing quality as market forces come to bear in higher education. Gose (1999) stated, "Unless we [higher education] develop measures of quality where colleges can actually provide

evidence of their contribution to student learning, then this whole system [of ranking colleges] turns

on resources and reputation, and reinforces the elitism of higher education" (p. A65).

 While continuing advocacy called upon higher education to expand its use of benchmarking,

Clark (1993) observes creating a new foundation for strategies in the advancement of higher

education to meet student mobility and global challenges. Similarly, Haack (1998) identified the

NACUBO Benchmarking Project as providing the first primary engagement of colleges and

universities in the overall improvement of American higher education as a whole by bringing

together the first general dialog on higher education administrative benchmarks. Shafer (1993)

observed, "[w]hether or not institutions participate in the NACUBO survey, they have much to gain

by pursuing benchmarking as a tool for improving administrative operations" (p. 36) and cautions

"[t]here is a risk in using any comparative databases as the sole input to decisions…[d]atabases are

simply a starting point in any inquiry or analysis" (p. 33).

 Examining the overall scope, history and proliferation of benchmarking efforts in higher

education in a comprehensive manner, Alstete (1995) observed:

> Due to its reliance on hard data and research methodology, benchmarking is especially suited
> for institutions of higher education…and universities have found that benchmarking helps
> overcome resistance to change, provides a structure for external evaluation, and creates new
> networks of communication between schools where valuable information and experiences
> can be shared. (p. v)

 Historic and future conditions in higher education see benchmarking models initially

developed by Camp (1989) and Spendolini (1992) evolving as professional organizations and

consortia provide needed change, reliability and methodology for expanding applications. While

current advocacy views benchmarking as important assets creating positive change other

observations point to particular cultural challenges. Organizational barriers found among faculty,

staff and administrators are observed as they resist acquiring the skills and competencies due to a

historic lack of accountability and internal assessment in the environment (Alstete, 1995).

Literature reviewed observed benchmarking as having the potential for a good fit with the campus environment as an agent for change and response to environmental factors. Challenges cited observe unique and historic cultural factors that may inhibit the expanded use of benchmarking in higher education. Consideration of these issues will be further explored.

K. HIGHER EDUCATION CULTURE, CHANGE AND BENCHMARKING

This section identifies organizational culture and personnel perceptions regarding change as important factors for consideration as an important part of planning when benchmarking is envisioned as a change strategy. Benchmarking will be explored as uniquely suited to address such challenges. Finally, primary factors important to the success or failure of any envisioned change strategy like benchmarking on campus are explored.

Speaking to challenges higher education may face when conducting change efforts such as those required by benchmarking, Bergquist (1992) asserts "[a]n appreciation of academic culture is essential to any effective use of second-order analyses or strategies for change in collegiate settings" (p. 7). This perspective also extends the need for higher education leaders to understand, "When efforts are initiated to bring about change (whether by individuals or by institutions), these must take into account that different strategies are needed and appropriate for each culture…a hybrid of strategies is required" (p. 7).

Cultural factors extended by Alstete (1995) and Bergquist (1992) as elements critical to the success of change efforts such as benchmarking in higher education observed colleges and universities possessing distinct cultural identities composed of a pluralistic groupings of agendas, needs, perceptions, beliefs and competencies to be understood in the context of administrative decision making and planning. This overarching challenge and historic internal focus in American higher education is reiterated as Rowley (1997) observed, "…simply, colleges and universities have

established themselves as the primary creators of knowledge and have actively developed the role of

being responsible for distilling and disseminating that knowledge largely on their own terms" (p. 54).

Viewing the application of quality principles in higher education environments, Zanqwill and

Roberts (1993) concluded that such change requires superior leadership that encourages and

promotes innovation with benchmarking emerging as one particular technique utilized by superior

leaders to face economic and market challenges to create innovative improvement. Describing

benchmarking as uniquely suited for creating change and innovation in higher education, it is seen as

enhancing creativity, innovation and delivering new funding streams and expansion even during

times of retrenchment. The authors observed that "Benchmarking is a basic pillar for becoming

best…[it] forces the people doing the benchmarking to see what programs other institutions are

undertaking, programs which are often much more superior and ingenious than had been realized"

(Zanqwill & Roberts, 1993, p. 8).

Shafer and Coate (1992) observed the need for higher education to change in the face of "cost

pressure and market uncertainty" (p. 31), viewing benchmarking as a primary means to navigate

these challenges through "objective measurements for baselining, goal setting, and improvement

tracking" (p. 31) to deal with increasing financial issues and public concern. These challenges were

compared as similar to those faced when the health care industry was restructured due to

"overcapacity, increased public concerns over rising costs, and, as a result, increased government

regulation and oversight" (Shafer & Coate, 1992, p. 29).

> Benchmarking may represent one possible solution suitable for addressing historic and future
> challenges facing higher education due to its ability to transform internal resistance based
> upon institutional pride into uniqueness when quality practices are refined to turn internal
> strengths into external best practices. U.S. colleges and universities are the products of
> several hundred years of evolution. Each has developed its own set of administrative polices
> and procedures—usually with great independence from other institutions. As a result,
> detailed data definitions are required to get comparable data, and developing those definitions
> is a time-intensive task that raises numerous technical issues…In other respects, though,
> uniqueness per se offers no advantage unless it is the uniqueness of "best in class"
> performance. (Shafer & Coate, 1992, p.33)

Stewart (1996) observed benchmarking as a cultural fit for adaptation in higher education due to its reliance on learning and research to "serve as a catalyst for organizational acceptance of a continuous improvement program because it evaluates existing performance, establishes future goals, and targets improvements" (p. 5). However, administrators are seen as lacking critical skills needed to identify key processes and define metrics needed for implementation. Stralser (1995) also identifies this "good fit" for benchmarking on campus:

> Campus cultures differ from corporate cultures; and within higher education there are many different styles among America's 3500 colleges and universities. Still, though educational benchmarking is young it is proving to be a novel and sometimes exciting new method of stimulating planned changes…While benchmarking is sometimes viewed as industrial espionage in business circles, colleges and universities are remarkably open and comfortable sharing information about their operations. Most institutions are likely to be flattered if others ask to come and study the secrets of their exceptional performance. (p. 18)

This section identified several cultural factors that may impact change strategies such as those envisioned when benchmarking is initiated on campus. Individual administrator perceptions and beliefs emerged as significant factors for further consideration.

L. ADMINISTRATOR ACCEPTANCE OF CHANGE AND BENCHMARKING

This section identifies the role of the administrator as a primary agent responsible for implementing change on campus. Benchmarking is identified as posing unique administrative challenges given its reliance on quality improvement philosophies evolving in higher education. Administrator perceptions are clarified as important factors to consider within any change strategy such as those envisioned with benchmarking.

The literature reflects that benchmarking challenges campus stakeholders to change cultures, beliefs, attitudes and perceptions about the nature of the work they complete. As such, the question of the campus leadership relative to these roles emerges. Melan (1993) states, "As with any new philosophy or way of thinking, TQM is subject to various degrees of acceptance ranging from

complete and enthusiastic adoption to total rejection" (p. 8). In the discussion of culture and change, the role of the individual administrator surfaces as a critical primary stakeholder in the success of any improvement strategy. Further insights note, "administrative functions of institutions of higher education…for the most part, are organized in a manner similar to businesses. Management, therefore, is the primary agent for initiating and promulgating change" (p. 8). Sherr (1991) similarly observed, "The administrative side is generally hierarchical in nature and often resembles models found in the corporate world" (p. 57) with "[a]dministrative staff attitudes resembl[ing] those found in the private sector" (p. 59).

While benchmarking is observed as a technique propelling change in higher education, administrators and "[t]he processes that drive successful organization change often are the focus of communication and network research that until now have not been discussed in tandem with benchmarking" (Bender & Shuh, 2002, p. 10). While the literature asserts the use of benchmarking in higher education as inducing improvements, questions still remain regarding more specific factors that impede or enhance benchmarking. Sherr (1991) suggested the need to better understand benchmarking within higher education as they pointed to individual "[r]esistance to change and cultural conflict" (p. 8) as important factors for additional study.

> A recognition and understanding of the barriers affecting the implementation of TQM are critical. In higher education, with its own organizational characteristics and traditions, it is imperative that one recognize the authority relationships between faculty and administration and the changes required in the role and attention of its leaders. (p. 61)

Kezar (2001) described an emerging focus on the need to study the people involved in higher education and their impact upon change efforts required for the effective implementation of quality improvement efforts. Particular areas observed as important needs for additional study include managerial culture, behaviors, values, perceptions and attitudes in relation to planning and change strategies. This focus on higher education change demonstrates the efficacy of examining organizational cultural models for understanding the change process. However, more research is

clearly needed in this area "as many questions remain unanswered and its potential for illuminating the change process is only partly fulfilled" (Kezar, 2001, p. 105).

Holm's (1972) early research observes Maslow's hierarchy as a basic framework for understanding employee-environment factors affecting managerial perceptions and emotional responses impacting change efforts in higher education.

> We, as administrators, must aim for a dynamic stability by adjusting and readjusting to internal and external stimulae. We seek a moving equilibrium in which there is a short term of maladjustment and resistance. We must adopt positive attitudes or we will be overcome by our internal and external environment. (Holm, 1972, p. 2)

Freed (1997) observed change as a "mind-set that helps people deal with situations from a different perspective" (p. 65) with productive administrator perceptions viewed as critical success factors at institutions where "the paradigm has shifted" (p. 51) to TQM. Change is observed as happening when "new rules, new boundaries, and new ways of behaving" (Freed, 1997, p. 51) emerge. These observations examine the administrator in context with a host of factors portraying benchmarking as successful when leaders are "ready to examine all aspects of organizational management systems and processes in concert with understanding attitudes, behaviors, and cultures" (p. 138).

The need to study the cultural affects such as the impact of administrator perceptions upon benchmarking use and expansion in higher education are more clearly defined in the report, Understanding and Facilitating Organizational Change in the 21st Century: Recent Research and Conceptualizations (Kezar, 2002):

> Cultural models are just emerging; this area is in need of research, especially because initial research has found a strong relationship between institutional culture and the particular change strategies that will be successful on a campus. However, these initial studies examined institutions as a whole. Considering that most change is occurring throughout the organization, future studies need to examine the impact of a department, division, and school cultures on the change process. There also needs to be more research on whether there is a culture of change or certain cultures that are more open to change. The roles of attitudes, motivations, emotions, intuition, energy, enthusiasm, and other human dimensions need closer analysis. This seems like a particularly important area, as social-cognition studies

have already illustrated the impact of mental models and embedded norms on resisting and facilitating change, which are concepts similar to attitudes and emotions. (p. 130)

While the study of staff perceptions within higher education administrative and functional areas may not as of yet reached the mainstream of scholarly debate, Woodward and Dudley (1991) echo this call for additional research. The authors observe student affairs' "absence of connections and coherence across the American educational enterprise…" and the need for cooperation between "faculty and student affairs in an effort to enhance the quality of campus life" (p. 18) to create "systematic programs that assess knowledge, skills, and attitudes" (p. 23) to develop institutional change initiatives. In line with this need to more narrowly focus on the impact an individual administrator may have on change, Bender and Shuh (2002) observe that "quality in education and services in higher education begins and ends with individuals…who deliver the educational programs and services" (p. 113) with "[s]uccessful transformational leaders…frequently able to accomplish more than they had intended, achieving goals that would not have been obtainable with less effective leaders" (p. 115). This dialog frames benchmarking as a change strategy dependent upon the perceptions and actions of administrators. Bender and Shuh (2002) convey benchmarking and administrators as critical change agents challenged with the need to alter institutional practices and transforming cultures and subcultures that have been in existence for decades. As such, the most insightful and visionary leaders are described as requiring many administrative support mechanisms as possible to succeed with benchmarking described as one such tool. (p. 119)

Alstete (1995) similarly observed these issues stating, "benchmarking can help overcome resistance to change that can be very strong in conservative organizations, such as colleges and universities" (p. 25) to echo the importance of understanding how entrenched perceptions and beliefs on campus may be affected if benchmarking can be successfully introduced into the organization campus culture. There are many observations which view higher education as possessing entrenched cultures that may not facilitate costumer focused changes needed for successful benchmarking to

occur. However, Bryan (1996) observes student affairs as one particular area of higher education possessing a culture suited to benchmarking:

> Higher education has a history of knowing what is best for customers. One exception is student affairs, which is dedicated to serving its customers—students. The philosophy of serving customers fits well with the objectives and motivations of student affairs professionals; it is natural for them to initiate plans focused on meeting student wants and needs. Total quality management provides structure, direction, and support to student affairs activities aimed at gathering student feedback. (p. 18)

Having identified benchmarking, organizational culture and administrator perceptions as key components to the successful implementation of benchmarking, the need to further explore and define these factors emerges. Much of the information reviewed refers to the need to understand campus and functional unit cultures, reactions and levels of acceptance related to change and improvement strategies. The need to understand institutional cultural assumptions regarding benchmarking initiatives encountered as the perceptions and opinions of faculty, staff and administrators observed the need for consideration before engaging in any benchmarking process. However, little information describes how these factors are defined or measured in higher education administrative units. Therefore, the following section draws upon research from the social sciences to describe and clarify potential applications of cognition techniques in the study of benchmarking and its relation to the practitioner and the student affairs unit in higher education.

M. MEASURING PERCEPTIONS

In an essay entitled, The Age of Social Transformation, Peter Drucker (1995), one of the earliest and most influential voices of the quality movement provided an analysis of the major challenges facing humanity on the economic, political and social horizons of the new century. The concept of an "emerging knowledge society" (p. 7) is presented and higher education institutions are confronted as the "center of the knowledge society" (p. 7). As such, the primary and overarching challenges facing all sectors of society were identified as changing current assumptions about the world and the nature

of work in all areas of industry. A new definition of productivity and worker competencies are said to "…require a good deal of formal education and the ability to acquire and apply theoretical and analytical knowledge. They required a different approach to work and a different mind-set…[a]t the very least they have to change their basic attitudes, values and beliefs (p. 5).

Drucker's (1995) assertion regarding the need for educational institutions to examine basic employee perceptions in order to meet the social, political and economic challenges of the new century poses a clarion call for action in higher education to further understand the perceptions, values and beliefs of its work force in order to effectively adapt in its role as the hub of this new knowledge society. As such, this inquiry responds by creating an understanding of how one may observe and measure such factors.

Typical techniques utilized for measurement focus on the individual's understanding and use of common communication methods as, "…language is so important to attitudinal experience and expression, it is only natural that most techniques for measuring…rely heavily on verbal material in the form of interviews and questionnaires" (Eiser, 1998, p.3)

Many of the interview techniques and questionnaires utilized in the measurement of perceptions are abstractions which seek to extract meaning to predict how individuals interpret interactions, establish norms, and interact based upon the current beliefs they possess. Henderson (1987) states that the measurement "…serves the human need to see order and consistency in what people say, think and do, so that given certain behavior predictions can be made about future behaviors...[it] is not something we can measure in the same way we can examine cells of a person's skin or measure the rate of her heartbeat" (p. 11).

The notion that inference and interpretation of subject perceptions reside within the appraisal of the researcher in the context of an established body of research defines measurement as reinforced through established models. As Eagly and Chaiken (1993) stated, such observations "are not directly observable; their existence can only be inferred from overt responses or indicators...as evaluative

tendencies manifest themselves in three general classes of indicators: cognitive, affective, and behavioral." (p. 23). It is in the standardization and quantification of terms and definitions represented within the instrument that the researcher establishes the objectivity needed for acceptable interpretation.

The definition and role of the researcher studying perceptions is further clarified to establish the soundness of numerical representations needing to be consistent and logical representations of relationships and meanings:

> Measurement, however, requires more than number assignment by some rule. Our real number system has certain properties such as order (e.g., 4 > 2), difference (e.g., 4 - 3 = 1), and ration (e.g., 6/2 = 3). The aim of measurement is to assign numbers to objects so that the properties of the numbers that are assigned reflect the relations of the objects to each other on the attribute being measured…[f]or example, if Person A has twice as much of the relevant attribute as Person B, we would like to assign numbers A and B that reflect that 2-to-1 relationship. (Eagly & Chaiken, 1993, p. 23).

Kiesler (1968) defined several techniques utilized in research to describe common methodologies as "self-reports, observation of behavior in a natural setting, measures drawn from reaction to stimuli, inferences drawn from the performance of objective tasks, inferences drawn from physiological reactions" (p. 10). Of the techniques reviewed, the most frequently utilized format for measurement, regardless of "definition or theory" (p. 9) is identified as the "pencil and paper instrument' (p. 9). Kiesler (1968) advocates the importance of such simplified techniques to the advancement of scientific inquiry. Also supporting the technique, Henderson (1987) observed the advantages of the questionnaire method as providing subjects' anonymity, time, and broader participation with uniformity, easy analysis and interpretation, and flexibility in administration seen as positive outcome for the researcher (p. 28). Disadvantages are seen as inflexibility of format and the restrictive nature of responses when only score results are used (p. 29).

Most paper and pencil instruments generally require subjects to "respond in a positive or negative manner to a social object" (Dawes, 1972, p.16) which is expressed in a verbal or written form to the subject. These objects are most often then characterized as positive and negative words

or phrases placed in contexts on either end of a scale to identify the subject's perception about a term or concept. Zimbardo (1970) observes that such components may be measured "by self-ratings of beliefs or by the amount of knowledge which a person has about some topic" (p. 9).

The measurement of perceptions or beliefs to form a sample representation of a larger group may be said to portray the given population by "tabulating answers to a questionnaire to establish the opinion of a given group" (Fishbein, 1967, p.9). Evaluating the use of numerical techniques Eiser (1988) states:

> The advantage of using numerical scores as representations is observed as these scores can be used to compare different people's attitudes with one another, or the attitudes of a single person in differing contexts or at different times. The disadvantage of numerical scores is the risk of reducing something that may be rich and complex to a single index that then assumes an importance out of proportion to its meaning. (p. 3)

The two pencil and paper-type techniques most often utilized to measure the factors develop "…a set of statements (or items) that range from expressions of extremely anti to extremely pro viewpoints on an issue, ideally with all intermediate positions between the extremes being represented" (Eiser, p.4), and, the Likert scale. A person's score is established by calculating a mean value based upon the responses checked off with regard to the values established for each of the issue statements (Zimbardo, p. 214, 1977). The Likert method is defined by Eiser (1988):

> Likert's method requires simply two groups of items, one group containing items that are relatively close to the anti extreme, and the other group, items relatively close to the pro extreme. These items are then presented to the subjects who record their levels of agreement in terms of a scale such as strongly disagree/disagree/undecided/agree/strongly agree. These ratings are then scored numerically as 1 to 5 (or –2 to +2) for the pro items, but are scored in reverse direction (5 to 1 or +2 to –2) for the anti items. Each subject's…score is simply the sum of these ratings of the total set of items. Note that the effect, on the total score, of disagreeing strongly with an anti item is the same as that of agreeing with a pro item. (p. 5)

A review of information regarding common techniques utilized for the measurement of individual opinions and perceptions revealed a grounding of instruments in a historic context as useful techniques for gathering information regarding both the individual and identifying group

characteristics where appropriate. The use of Likert-type scales are viewed as some of the oldest and most familiar questionnaire styles utilized for gathering such data.

Having created a broader understanding of the methods utilized for the measurement of perceptions, the importance of understanding the affects of such factors within organization improvement strategies emerges. The need to understand the administrator in relation to changes envisioned in benchmarking by identifying and understanding their perceptions is observed as an important consideration for success on campus.

N. STAFF TRAINING NEEDS ASSOCIATED WITH BENCHMARKING

The literature identifies passageways through which benchmarking moved from the private sector into higher education on the back of quality improvement as changes in administrative philosophies, focused case studies and other quality improvement practices and interventions. Quantities of articles and books support the notion that college and universities improve quality and increase productivity through such efforts. However, much less information examined needs, perceptions, competencies and/or gaps that exist to ensure the successful adaptation and uses of quality improvement techniques such as benchmarking in the higher education environment.

Freed (1997) states, "Providing quality service entails two primary challenges, first, in many cases only the front-line people who directly interact with stakeholders are trained how to provide quality service. One of the quality principles is systematic development of all institutional members, not just front-line members, so that they are aware of and skilled in meeting stakeholder expectations" (p. 58).

Some criticism points to a need for institutions to go beyond rhetoric for the sake of public perception to advance words into actions if institutions are to assimilate the principles of quality found in benchmarking.

The actions of senior leaders reflect their ideas about empowerment and continuous improvement. When they are serious about empowerment and continuous improvement, senior leaders commit time and resources to developing the required knowledge and skills in all members of the organization. Education and training are essential to transform institutions and the responsibility to invest in human resources rests with senior leaders. (Freed, 1997, p.81)

Compounding the perceptual challenge for benchmarking use in higher education, Keller (1983) offered a critical perspective observing institutions of higher education as run by individuals who have not received any formal training as administrators. This critical observation is further reinforced as Freed (1997) states, "Ironically, the primary function of colleges and universities is the development of students, yet faculty and staff development is often a low priority…[b]ecause they lack training, administrators often make decisions without collecting the necessary data or consulting the appropriate people" (p. 83).

Sherr (1991) clarified the importance of administrator inclusion to bridge the quality gap while adding the dimension of organization culture stating, "Unfortunately, training programs can overlook the most significant requirement for program success: the need to change culture, organizations may use problem-solving processes and techniques such as employee teams and quality circles as a cure-all" (p. 54). Effective quality implementation requires that "[s]taff development must receive a higher priority in the organization as a critical component on the development of programs that affect its attitudes and processes" (p. 61).

Examining the use and impact of quality improvement techniques, Xue (1998) found that National Association of College and University Business Officers (NACUBO) study participants identified nonacademic administrators as the driving force behind quality efforts within institutions. Additionally, the majority of these same institutions reported benchmarking as the most frequently utilized technique in administrative areas. For those conducting benchmarking, the most successful projects were reported among institutions already experienced with quality principles and philosophy. Institutions new to benchmarking were cautioned to conduct introductory efforts as an

important first step in faculty and staff preparation for any significant quality improvement initiative such as benchmarking (p. 56).

The most comprehensive professional standards and modes of practice in the student affairs profession which define "quality assurance" (Miller, 2003, p.2) for student affairs performances are enumerated within the Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education (Miller, 2003). The primary professional organizations for student affairs, The American College Personnel Association (APCA), and The National Association of Student Personnel Administrators (NASPA), are defined as foundational and primary contributing CAS members (p. 1). Today CAS is composed of 32 member associations which "have promulgated 29 sets of functional area standards…for college student affairs administration" (p. 2). As such, Miller (2003) states "CAS standards are constructed to represent criteria that every higher education institution and its student support programs should be expected and able to meet with the application of reasonable effort and diligence" (p. 3). In applications to staff training, training and development of personnel and functional units the CAS standards are seen as enabling working groups to "study various criteria to determine how well they and their colleagues are implementing the standards in their daily work with students…to influence good practice and provide a vehicle for implementing program self-study" (p.11). The CAS standards are additionally observed as a critical tool to begin the process of quality improvement in student affairs "because they speak to issues of institutional change as practitioners struggle to meet the needs of ever changing student bodies" (p. 4).

This section clarified the need for higher education to focus on the further identification of practitioner knowledge and training to improve practices. The amount of training that the average administrator receives is viewed as nominal while the need for the engagement of staff related to quality improvement is advised when it is to be utilized to affect change and quality improvement on campus.

O. CONCLUSIONS

Benchmarking is a technique which has grown in scope and use within higher education and, most recently, student affairs. An examination of the changing face of American higher education indicated that benchmarking may be a powerful, if not critical technique that institutions can use to face challenges if properly understood and utilized. While different benchmarking models exist, the literature provided evidence that a well-conceived benchmarking effort can impact an administrative unit, campus, university or educational system.

Information about the introduction of quality improvement techniques in higher education and a detailed examination of benchmarking literature indicated that within the past ten years, benchmarking has been introduced into the mainstream dialog and use in many universities and colleges. Following this introduction, benchmarking surfaced in 1996 at the practitioner-level in student affairs via advocacy and support from the American College Personnel Association (ACPA) and has received a great deal of attention as a technique uniquely suited for this environment.

There appeared to be primarily positive perceptions about the use of benchmarking in student affairs as well as an overall perspective observed in the literature advocating the expanded use of benchmarking to help institutions meet many short and long-term challenges. Unlike its rapid evolution and application within business and industry, benchmarking use in higher education may be observed as adapting new frameworks within what many authors observe to be a positive environmental fit. However, many of these observations cite significant cultural challenges facing the expanded use of techniques within the micro levels and functional units of the institution.

Definitions and methods for the measurement of individual perceptions may be useful for understanding current challenges facing higher education if benchmarking is to be used as a technique to formulate new strategies for improvement in student affairs. Understanding staff perceptions to more accurately predict and inform benchmarking planning in student affairs may aid its introduction into diverse organization functional units and cultures. These types of studies are

most often observed in examinations of perception and behavioral applications aimed at both individuals and groups.

The application of benchmarking in higher education faces challenges as a great deal of variability exists among higher education institutions and individual functional units due to that fact that each college or university is historically very different from another. It is this sense of pride, culture and individuality, often held as primary and core values, which may challenge the successful adaptation of benchmarking if new training and philosophies regarding improvement and quality are to be introduced. However, professional standards emerge as critical components joining practitioners across institutions regardless of institutional affiliations and cultures.

While the establishment of standards and best practices may be helpful when derived from broad consortium data or major benchmarking studies, enhanced understanding of individual staff members' perceptions regarding improvement expectations and the relation to unit planning should be conducted to meet specific institutional cultural factors and training prerequisites if the most is to be gained from any proposed benchmarking initiative.

Benchmarking is cited as enhancing operations and introducing change in higher education while individual student affairs units within institutions are viewed as not routinely reviewing processes, conducting assessment, or, initiating benchmarking efforts in any uniform manner. Other challenges arise as the changing the face of higher education must adapt quickly by reengineering its thinking about staffing, processes, and educational products so that the essential elements of quality meet the increasing demands of the public and government.

The idea of adapting best practices, standards and trade secrets responsible for superior quality in higher education may not be as easy to achieve as in the private sector where common products exist and the positive role competition plays in improving quality and productivity. Competition is a relatively new concept for higher education and it is arguable as to whether higher education can establish more measurable educational standards as "products" as in research and

support areas where performances may be defined as outcomes, outputs, metrics or contractual relationships. The notion of changing market forces and managing costs continually confront colleges and universities but little reform or governmental action has yet been observed, as has been the case in the health care industry.

The model of the Baldrige Award, as established in the private sector, may not have entered the formal vocabulary of higher education but benchmarking is a most-recognized term among administrators. As institutional research and planning offices, professional organizations and consulting firms have emerged in higher education to communicate with key college and university stakeholders, benchmarking has become part of the culture and vocabulary of administrators, faculty and staff members. However, one might also assert that there is some real question as to how well these same individuals understand benchmarking, what perceptions they hold regarding the technique, what training they need, and how best practices and standards may be identified for use in the environments in which they work. The literature defined the significant impact that individual subjective perceptions play upon action or inaction in response to quality initiatives based upon the ones' evaluation of environmental factors. If benchmarking is to be utilized as a technique for change within higher education, it is clear that creating a greater identification and understanding of such issues is an important area for continued study.

P. SUMMARY OF THE REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Benchmarking is cited as quality improvement technique enhancing organization performance by enabling innovation and rapid improvement in response to the identification and adaptation of observed standards and practices (Alstete, 1995; Bender & Shuh, 2002; Camp, 1989; Spendolini 1992; Upcraft & Shuh, 1996). It contains basic assumptions which provide methods for organizations to assess operations, improve quality, manage change, and react to market forces in

competitive environments (Clayton, 1993; Freed, 1997; Masters, 1992; Ruben, 2001; Williams, 1993). The need for student affairs functional units and personnel to become more involved in benchmarking to improve and create high quality campus environments for students is identified as a critical challenge facing the student affairs profession (Astin, 1985; Blimling, G., Whitt, E., & Associates, 1999; Upcraft and Shuh, 1996).

Understanding the perceptions of personnel involved in quality improvement initiatives such as benchmarking is observed as a critical and initial consideration for embarking on such efforts. The types of organizational changes required of benchmarking in higher education observe the importance of understanding factors like organization cultural characteristics and staff perceptions as part of the effort if it is to be most effective (Alstete, 1995; Bender & Shuh, 2002; Berquist, 1992; Freed, 1997; Holm, 1972; Kezar, 2001; McCathern, 1999; Melan, 1993; Sherr, 1991; Stewart, 1996; Stralser, 1995; Zanqwill & Roberts, 1995).

Student affairs is seen as one particular administrative area of higher education uniquely suited for benchmarking use due to unique historic, cultural and staff member propensities existing within the profession (Bender & Shuh, 2002; Bryan, 1996; Upcraft & Shuh, 1996). However, little inquiry has examined such factors or assumptions within functional units of student affairs. Many definitions are observed for benchmarking within the literature. Bryan's (1996) definition of benchmarking in student affairs states, "[t]he purpose of this process is to identify a standard against which an organization can measure and improve their way of performing some task or role" (p. 40).

Benchmarking seeks standards or "benchmarks" for improving performances and quality. Relevant research suggested that it "must be conceptualized and operationalized within the system of which it is part…this means that a comprehensive student affairs assessment model must measure any student affairs operation against professional standards that have been promulgated by professional associations, regional accrediting agencies and others" (Upcraft & Shuh, 1996, p. 252). The Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education (Miller, 2003) provides

functional unit professional standards "designed to overcome the 'silo effect' so common throughout higher education wherein autonomous administrative units, programs and services function as if the territorial imperative were viable…the CAS standards are highly utilitarian and promote interdepartmental, inter-program, and inter-service cooperation and collaboration" (p. 3). The CAS standards for the Campus Activities Programs (CAP) functional unit represent the most widely accepted standards for planning and program assessment in student affairs (Miller, 2003). While the standards provide the opportunity for staff to "study various criteria to determine how well they and their colleagues are implementing the standards in their daily work"(p. 11) to influence "good practices" (p. 12) there is little information investigating how the practitioner in the functional unit perceive the use of the standards as benchmarks for their programs and services.

The importance of expanding the study of these issues to incorporate the exploration of functional unit conditions, personnel and cultures (Epper, 1999; Kezar, 2001; McCatherine, 1999) matched goals and opinions reviewed advocating the need to understand organizational change methods such as benchmarking in appropriate context to job functions and in consideration of the personnel working in diverse campus environments (Alstete, 1995; Freed, 1997; Kezar, 2001; Shuh, 2002). Providing a pragmatic and logical study of benchmarking in campus activities programs seeking practitioners' perceptions framed within a definition (Bryan, 1996), model (Upcraft & Shuh, 1996) and standards (Miller, 2003) specifically designed for student affairs may be observed as an opportunity to understand new iterations of assessment in student affairs and higher education.

Due to the recent migration of benchmarking from the private sector into higher education, and, more recently, student affairs, there is a need to study questions associated with its arrival. How can the perceptions of student affairs personnel be measured in the organization to inform strategies creating and defining benchmarking? Are there particular benchmarks, practices and standards important for benchmarking in student affairs? What practical issues affecting benchmarking and the work of the practitioner may be identified as efforts unfold at the functional unit level? Successful

benchmarking promises quality improvements, cost reductions and more efficient operations. It is clear that the further exploration of benchmarking in student affairs is needed to describe how this assessment method is adapting to address administrative and management challenges in this environment.

IV. RESEARCH PROCEDURES

This study analyzed the perceptions of campus activities program leaders (CAPLs) regarding the use

of the functional unit standards provided by The Council for the Advancement of Standards in

Higher Education (CAS) as benchmarks for campus activities programs within a multi-campus

university. The research questions considered in the study were as follows.

A. RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND THE SURVEY

1. What are the perceptions of campus activities program leaders regarding the applicability of CAS components as benchmarks to improve campus activities programs?

2. Which CAS components do campus activities program leaders perceive as the most important benchmarks to improve campus activities programs?

3. What differences and similarities exist in CAP leader perceptions of CAS components' applicability and importance for the identification of benchmarks?

4. How do demographic characteristics of campus activity program leaders relate to their perceptions of benchmarks?

5. What is the level of CAP leader awareness of CAS?

6. What benchmarks would CAP leaders suggest that are not presented in CAS?

To clarify how the structure of the survey related to the research questions posed, Table 1

displays the question and the survey items used to examine the questions. Section II of the survey

addressed the first, second and third research questions posed. To accomplish this, CAS functional

Table IV.1: Research Questions and Survey Questions

Question 1	Question 2	Question 3	Question 4	Question 5	Question 6
What are the perceptions of campus activities program leaders regarding the applicability of CAS components as benchmarks to improve campus activities programs?	Which CAS components do campus activities program leaders perceive as the most important benchmarks to improve campus activities programs?	What differences and similarities exist in CAP leader perceptions of CAS components' applicability and importance for the identification of benchmarks?	How do demographic characteristics of campus activity program leaders relate to their perceptions of benchmarks?	What is the level of CAP leader awareness of CAS?	What benchmarks would CAP leaders suggest that are not presented in CAS?
Survey Item	Survey Item	Survey Item	Survey Item	Survey Item	Survey Item
Section II Questions 7 - 124 Applicability for Improvement	Section II Questions 7 - 124 Importance to Work	Section II Questions 7 - 124 Applicability for Improvement and Importance to Work	Section I Questions 1 – 6 compared to Applicability and Improvement Questions 7 - 124	Section III Question 125	Section III Question 126

unit standards for campus activities programs were adapted as statements rated by CAPLs. All of these items asked the participants to provide ratings on two Likert-type scales for each statement presented. Applicability was the first of the two rating scales which comprised the odd numbered questions in items 7 through 124 and applied to the first research question.

These questions identified the perceptions of campus activities program leaders regarding the applicability of CAS components as benchmarks to improve campus activities programs. The second research question was answered by the second rating scale which comprised the even numbered questions in items 7 through 124. It answered which CAS components CAPLs perceived as the most important benchmarks to the work they do in campus activities programs.

Ratings received for both applicability and importance in Section II were combined in analysis to address the third research question answering what differences and similarities existed in CAPLs' perceptions of CAS components' applicability and importance for the identification of component benchmarks.

Research question four revealed how demographic characteristics of CAPLs related to ratings of component benchmarks. To address this, Section I, questions 1 through 6, requested demographic information which was compared to data gathered in Section II to examine responses based upon the characteristics disclosed by respondents.

Research question five measured the level of CAPLs' awareness of CAS. Section III, question 125, which provided an understanding of CAPLs' awareness of the CAS standards prior to the information provided on the survey. It assisted in analysis and described conditions and identified potential issues which may exist or assumptions made relative to the population and standards and assisted in conclusions made regarding the survey.

Research question six examined benchmarks CAPLs suggested which were not presented in the survey for the improvement of the campus activities program. This item was represented in Section III, question 126, and provided the opportunity to submit comment information.

B. THE POPULATION

This was an initial investigation in an area significantly lacking in research to this point. Therefore, the identification of an appropriately framed case study group fitting the operational definitions and frameworks considered in the study was critical. The campus activities program at the Pennsylvania State University was selected for the study due to organizational factors observed as a commitment to quality improvement principles and cultural characteristics considered important to the development of benchmarking (McCatherine, 1999; Xue, 1999, Freed, 1997, Upcraft and Shuh, 1996).

The central PSU campus activities programs office facilitates the development and management direction for CAP at the university-wide level and any system-wide benchmarking initiative. Campus Activities Program Leader contact and position information for the study were

obtained through the central office. These staff members are those identified in positions within the campus student affairs administrative structure at each campus with job responsibilities and duties correlating with the defined CAS criteria. These personnel plan and implement training for student leaders; provide continuity, services and support for student clubs and organizations; educate students about institutional policy, related legal matters, and fiscal responsibilities; mediate conflicts between individuals, student organizations and the campus community; encourage innovation and responsibility in student program implementation; provide opportunities for students to practice leadership and organizational skills; assist students in the integration of classroom knowledge with actual practice; and develop programs and instruct in areas such as governance, leadership, cultural, social, recreational, artistic, political and religious activities, ethics, diversity, and other critical institution values (Miller, 2003, p. 51).

While these roles and responsibilities described by CAS pertain to the staff examined in the study, variations in specific job titles and the focus of individual responsibilities and duties for aspects of campus activities programs existed throughout the system. While the roles described may be considered fundamental responsibilities for these staff, some positions placed more emphasis upon particular aspects. Dependent upon the campus, some staff members assumed a more generalized role while others were more specialized with regard to some responsibility areas based upon campus prioritizations and needs. For example, student organization leadership development may have required a larger portion of a staff time at one campus while development of student social programming may be a greater focus at another. Differences in scope and volume were established at each campus by the individual student affairs units based on need.

Training for staff at the University-wide level consisted of urgent policy and procedure updates communicated by a staff list serve and hosted on a Web site as well as informal communication networks developed among these staff members. Two yearly training sessions were also conducted on such matters for staff from all locations. Additionally, one staff member in the

central office served as the primary liaison between campuses and offices with regard to questions, resources and policy matters.

      Campus locations, approximate student enrollment and the number of staff identified at each location are presented in Table 2. The university enrolled a total of 72,615 undergraduate students potentially affected by the quality of campus activities programs offered at 20 locations surveyed and defined itself as a multi-campus system. University Park was the largest campus examined consisting of 41,289 students. A total of 15 staff were identified for inclusion from the campus. Additional campuses comprised 19 locations serving 31,326 students with a total of 28 CAPLs identified for inclusion. A total of 43 respondents were identified for participation in the survey.

Table IV.2: Campus Locations, Student Enrollment, and Number of Campus Activities Program Leaders (CAPLs)

Campus Location	Student Enrollment	# CAPLs
Abington	3,143	2
Altoona	3,766	2
Beaver	666	2
Berks	2,416	2
Delaware County	1,636	2
DuBois	848	1
Erie	3,593	3
Fayette	1,066	2
Harrisburg	3,729	1
Hazleton	1,114	1
Lehigh Valley	680	2
McKeesport	798	*0
Mont Alto	1,028	2
New Kensington	990	1
Schuylkill	969	1
Shenango	958	1
Wilkes-Barre	779	1
Worthington Scranton	1,354	1
York	1,793	1
Total Outside U.P.	**31,326**	**28**
University Park	41,289	15
Total for University	**72,615**	**43**

*indicates a vacancy in the CAPL position at the time of survey.

C. INSTRUMENT

A total of 43 respondents received an E-mail invitation to participate in the study. A Web link within the letter connected participants to a World Wide Web survey on the Internet. Upon connecting to the Web site, CAPLs were provided instructions and definitions as well as additional information about the survey. Section I of the survey asked the respondent to answer questions regarding individual demographic characteristics. These areas included: Gender; Years of Professional Experience; Race/Ethnic Group, Supervisory Status; Employment Status; and, Educational Status.

Section II was composed of statements derived from 13 CAS component areas specifying essential best practices in higher education for campus activities programs. These components areas were defined as: Mission; Programming; Leadership; Organization and Management; Human Resources; Financial Resources; Facilities, Technology, Equipment; Legal Responsibilities; Equity and Access; Campus and External Relations; Diversity; Ethics; and, Assessment and Evaluation (Miller, 2003, p. 52-59). The standards presented by CAS are generally regarded within the student affairs profession as essential quality practices in higher education. Therefore, the study sought CAPLs' perceptions regarding the applicability and importance of the statements and did not specifically examine the validity or reliability of the standards.

Campus Activities Program Leaders rated opinions utilizing Likert-type, seven point scales regarding statement applicability and importance from 1 (Lowest) to 7 (Highest) related to campus activities programs. A seven point scale was selected as it is most commonly used as an intensity indicator (Converse & Presser, 1986, p. 37). Two response scales were presented for each of the statements provided. In the first scale, CAPLs evaluated the applicability of the statement as a standard against which campus activities programs at Penn State could be improved. In the second scale, CAPLs rated statement importance relative to the work they do in Penn State activities programs.

Section III contained two questions. The first sought respondents' level of awareness regarding CAS prior to the information provided on the survey. The second was a comment area which enabled respondents to provide information regarding possible benchmarks not represented in the survey which may be important to quality improvement efforts for the program examined.

The goal of the survey was to enable the researcher's measurement and analysis of CAPLs' perceptions to identify specific CAS components as benchmarks for the improvement of the campus activities program framed within a benchmarking definition, model, and standards developed within the student affairs profession (Bryan, 1996; Miller, 2003; Upcraft & Shuh, 1996).

D. DATA COLLECTION

A Web based survey was suited to facilitate the collection of data due to staff familiarity with this format and rapid responses typical to their work due to dispersed campus locations across the state (Appendix D). The advantages to conducting the survey in this manner were noted as possessing the same informational content as telephone or mailed surveys, exhibiting greater return rates, error reduction, significantly reduced data collection time, easy submission and movement of data for scoring and control over response time (Wortman & Upcraft, 2001, pp. 102-109). The time frame for the study was selected based upon the experience of the central office with the dissemination and collection of information from the CAPLs.

Appropriate permission to conduct the study was obtained through institutional review procedures at the University of Pittsburgh and The Pennsylvania State University (Appendix A). E-mail addresses and contact information for all campus activities program leaders included in the study were furnished by the central office. An initial mass E-mail was constructed and sent to participants using the Eudora E-mail program (Appendix C). The E-mail contained a brief introduction, statement of consent to participate in the study, and the Web page link needed to enter the Internet survey Web site. Participant consent was implied upon acceptance of terms and participant entry into the survey Web site. The participant was registered as part of the study upon final completion and submission of the survey. The survey was launched on October 29, 2004 with a response date of November 12, 2004. Needed reminders were conducted to individual E-mail addresses on November 5, 2004. Final reminders were made via phone on November 9 and 10, 2004.

An internet hosting service was utilized to adapt the researcher's instrument from Microsoft Word into a Web site format.   Since the questionnaire was lengthy, the enhanced Web page features made the respondents' completion easier and faster. Additionally, the design of the Web site created

needed navigation processes to ensure that each statement was presented and rated sequentially and logically with statement items appearing with appropriate response scales. Data collection used of state-of-the-art security connections on a secure Web server for transmission of information. Confidentiality was considered to be a high priority due to the need for participants to feel free to offer critical responses regarding the campus activities programs in which they worked. To address this issue, randomized identification numbers were generated upon participant submission of the survey. Protocols ensured that login to the survey site was authorized and submission of results could take place only one time per respondent. The Web site collection and report production reduced the risk of errors associated with the manual tabulation of data. Raw participant response data was provided to the researcher as a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet file at the close of data collection. This data was saved and then imported into the SPSS computer program for variable coding and statistical analysis.

E. PILOT STUDY

To facilitate learning regarding the use of the survey, a pilot study was conducted. Four CAPLs working in university campus activities programs in within the state of Pennsylvania were contacted and agreed to take the survey and offer feedback. This study was conducted to understand any problems and issues associated with the Web survey as it was planned for use within the larger study group. The participants for the pilot were not part of the system examined and were not included in the results. Identifying CAPLs working in different campus locations in corresponding staff roles as defined in the study ensured that a similar peer group was utilized.

The source for pilot study E-mail contact was located through information found on the Web sites for the institutions examined. Each of the participants worked at campuses of differing sizes

with similar patterns of program offerings. These ratings were assumed to provide a representation of how the larger group might respond to the survey.

Access to the group was fast, effective and designed to understand issues which may have emerged prior to launching the larger survey. Participants were asked to provide feedback as to whether or not the survey was clear, easy to navigate, and could be finished within the envisioned time frame communicated. An additional outcome for the researcher was to determine if the Web based survey functioned properly and data was collected and compiled accurately as planned. Based upon the survey responses received and feedback offered, respondents reported no problems and found the survey easy to understand and navigate within the expected time frame. Data received was collected, compiled, and tabulated as planned by the researcher.

F. DATA ANALYSIS

Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics at the end of the collection period specified. Each question represented in the survey answered the individual research questions and the data was analyzed to understand the ratings of the Campus Activities Program Leaders examined. The exception was Section 3, question 126, which was an open ended response. The data analysis examined the ratings to enable the researcher to identify benchmark components for improving the campus activities program examined. Demographic information was also analyzed to understand any issues and caveats contained within as it related to the population examined. The goal of the data analysis was to understand the perceptual ratings of the CAPLs examined to enable the researcher to assess and examine the information collected as the basis for selecting quality improvement benchmarks for campus activities programs.

V. FINDINGS

A. INTRODUCTION

Descriptive statistics were used to analyze responses to the survey instrument to answer the research questions. The first two research questions examined ratings of campus activities program leaders through the examination of applicability and importance summary means for 13 CAS components. The third question combined results from questions one and two to report component gap scores identifying benchmarks for campus activities programs. The fourth research question examined CAPLs demographic characteristics as they related to component gap scores. The fifth research question examined respondents' awareness of CAS. The final research question observed suggestions for benchmarks submitted by the participants. This analysis begins with a description of the demographic data submitted.

B. DEMOGRAPHIC DESCRIPTION OF POPULATION STUDIED

The population for the study included 43 CAPLs working at The Pennsylvania State University among 20 campus locations during the fall 2004 semester. The participants were selected based upon position designations within the University fitting the operational definitions the study. Surveys were submitted by 32 of the 43 campus activities program leaders contacted for a return rate of 74%..

Table V.1: Gender of CAPLs Participating

	N	Percent
Male	12	37.5
Female	20	62.5
Total	32	100

The gender of respondents is shown in Table 3. Twenty women and twelve men participated within

the Penn State CAPL population

Reporting years of professional experience in student affairs (Table 4), the majority (56.3%)

of the survey respondents (n=18) indicated less experience in the field with five or fewer years. The

smallest number of respondents (12.5%) reported the greatest amount of professional experience in

student affairs at more than 10 years.

Table V.2: Professional Experience of CAPLs Participating

	Frequency	Percent
Fewer than 2 years	8	25
3 through 5 years	10	31.3
6 through 8 years	5	15.6
8 through 10 years	5	15.6
More than 10 years	4	12.5
Total	32	100

White student affairs personnel represented the largest Race/Ethnic response as reported in

Table 5. Thirty of the respondents (93.8%) identified themselves as White.

Table V.3: Race/Ethnicity of CAPLs Participating

	Frequency	Percent
African American	1	3.1
White	30	93.8
Other	1	3.1
Total	32	100

Supervisory status identified whether or not the CAPL supervised staff within the University as depicted in Table 6. Eighteen of the respondents (56.3%) reported they supervised staff within the University. Fewer respondents indicated supervisory experience with 14 CAPLs (43.8%) indicating they did not supervise staff.

Table V.4: Supervisory Status of CAPLs Participating

	N	Percent
I have responsibility for staff	18	56.3
I do not have supervisory responsibility for staff	14	43.8
Total	32	100

Employment status within The Pennsylvania State University was defined as Standing or Fixed term appointments. A standing appointment was an ongoing employment status with no specified date ending CAPL employment. A Fixed Term appointment was defined by a contract articulating the effective start and end date for employment. Responses in Table 7 observed the largest number of CAPLs (n=22) in Standing appointments. Fewer staff members were in Fixed term appointments with 10 of them (31.3%) reporting a contract defining University employment.

Table V.5: Employment Status of CAPLs Participating

	N	Percent
Standing (Full time appointment)	22	68.8
Fixed term (Contract with end date)	10	31.3
Total	32	100

Twenty-two of the respondents (68.8%) reported educational status as holding a Masters degree as reported in Table 8. Ten CAPLs' (31.3%) reported a Bachelors degree as the highest educational degree held. None of the respondents reported holding a degree higher than Masters or lower than Bachelors.

Table V.6: Educational Status of CAPLs Participating

	Frequency	Percent
Bachelors	10	31.3
Masters	22	68.8
Total	32	100

C. FINDINGS FOR EACH RESEARCH QUESTION

The survey collected CAPLs' ratings for analysis to approximate component benchmarks as targets for the improvement of the campus activities programs examined. All of the CAS components examined were assumed to represent potential benchmarks against which the campus activities program could improve quality and performance (Bryan, 1996, p.40). The analysis created two

component summary means for each CAS component representing Campus Activities Program

Leaders' ratings of the applicability and importance for the 13 areas examined. All CAS component

summary means and items within were based upon the uniform subject matter defined by CAS. Each

of the twenty six CAS means for applicability and importance utilized for analysis in research

questions one, two and three were created by summing CAPLs' ratings gathered from within each

area. This sum was then divided by the number of items that comprised the CAS component

summary means for applicability and importance. For example, for the applicability mean for

Financial Resources, respondent ratings for each of the four items that comprised the scale were

summed and then divided by four. The CAS component means with the number of statement items

and reliability estimates gathered for those examined are listed in Table 9.

Table V.7: CAS Components, Number of Items and Alpha

CAS Component	Number of Items	Alpha
Mission – Applicability	2	*
Mission – Importance	2	*
Programming – Applicability	3	*
Programming – Importance	3	*
Leadership – Applicability	13	.92
Leadership – Importance	13	.88
Organization and Management – Applicability	2	*
Organization and Management – Importance	2	*
Human Resources – Applicability	10	.85
Human Resources – Importance	10	.80
Financial Resources – Applicability	4	.75
Financial Resources - Importance	4	.80
Facilities, Equipment, Technology – Applicability	1	*
Facilities, Equipment, Technology – Importance	1	*
Legal Responsibilities – Applicability	4	.86
Legal Responsibilities – Importance	4	.81
Equity and Access – Applicability	4	.75
Equity and Access – Importance	4	.75
Campus and External Relations – Applicability	1	*
Campus and External Relations – Importance	1	*
Diversity – Applicability	3	*
Diversity – Importance	3	*
Ethics – Applicability	9	.93
Ethics – Importance	9	.83
Assessment and Evaluation – Applicability	3	*
Assessment and Evaluation – Importance	3	*

* Indicates insufficient number of items for analysis

For those summary means composed of four or more items, Cronbach's Alpha was utilized as an estimate of reliability (Aiken, 1996, p. 232). Applications in the social sciences regard values as low as .65 as representing reliable estimates (p. 82). All reported values for those examined ranged from a low of .75 to a high of .93, indicating satisfactory reliability.

The analysis examined CAPLs' perceptions regarding the applicability and importance of the CAS components in questions one and two. Question three examined similarities and difference represented between applicability and importance means to identify benchmark components.

Demographic information collected was analyzed in question four to understand how those characteristics related to respondents' perceptions of the components. Additional research questions examined awareness of CAS and provided the opportunity for participants to suggest additional benchmarks in questions five and six.

1. Research Question 1: What are the perceptions of campus activities program leaders regarding the applicability of CAS components as benchmarks to improve campus activities programs?

Question one examined applicability summary means for the 13 CAS component areas examined. Respondents were asked to rate the applicability of CAS components as benchmarks to improve campus activities programs. This question was considered a broader program measure intended to gain an understanding of how CAPLs generally viewed the CAS components applicability for improving campus activities programs as a whole. The component summary means presented in Table 10 were reported from highest to lowest indicating CAPLs' responses to answer the question. Respondents rated component statements for the corresponding CAS area on a 7 point Likert-Type scale with the lowest possible response on the scale placed 1 as "Lowest Applicability for Improvement", and 7 was "Highest Applicability for Improvement" relative to PSU campus activities programs.

Table V.8: Applicability of CAS by Component Summary Means

CAS Component	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Assessment and Evaluation	32	5.44	1.14
Organization and Management	32	5.27	1.15
Diversity	32	5.26	.99
Financial Resources	32	5.20	.97
Facilities, Technology, Equipment	31	5.13	1.52
Campus and External Relations	32	5.12	1.16
Programming	30	5.06	.86
Legal Responsibilities	32	5.05	1.16
Mission	30	4.88	.86
Leadership	31	4.86	.85
Equity and Access	32	4.80	1.03
Human Resources	32	4.64	.78
Ethics	31	4.56	1.22

The five components reported as most applicable to improving campus activities programs were considered. Among the 13 CAS components, Assessment and Evaluation reported the highest mean of 5.44 (SD = 1.14) with the second as Organization and Management (mean 5.27, SD = 1.15), followed by Diversity (mean 5.26, SD = .99) and Financial Resources, (mean 5.20, SD .97) with Facilities, Technology, Equipment (mean 5.13, SD = 1.52) reported fifth. Standard deviations for the highest means did not seem to indicate broad variability with the exception of Facilities, Technology, Equipment, which had the highest standard deviation reported for all 13 components. The frequency of ratings for the Facilities, Technology, Equipment, component ranged from "Lowest Applicability

for Improvement" to "Highest Applicability for Improvement" on the seven point scale. These

ratings were reported as "2" at 6.5 percent; "3" at 12.9 percent; "4" at 6.5 percent; "5" at 32.3

percent; "6" at 19.4 percent; and, "7" with 22.6 percent of the CAPL responses for the component.

All applicability means were reported above the mid point of the 7 point scale. The means

indicated that CAPLs rated Assessment and Evaluation, Organization and Management, Diversity,

and Financial Resources, Facilities, Technology, Equipment, as the most applicable components for

the improvement of PSU campus activities programs.

2. Research Question 2: Which CAS components do campus activities program leaders perceive as the most important benchmarks to improve campus activities programs?

This question asked respondents to rate the importance of the CAS components relative to the work

they do in campus activities programs. Table 11 reported summary means on the individual measure

to represent CAPLs' perceptions of the importance the components provided. Again, a 7 point

Likert-Type scale was used and appeared directly below the applicability scale in the presentation of

the statements evaluated in the survey. The scale positioned 1 as "Lowest Importance to Work", and

7 as "Highest Importance to Work". CAS Diversity reported the highest mean of 5.82, standard

deviation 1.02, with Financial Resources reported as the second highest at 5.76, standard deviation

.84, and Legal Responsibilities was third at 5.74, standard deviation .82. The fourth highest was

Facilities, Technology, Equipment (mean 5.72, SD = 1.08), followed by both Ethics (mean 5.69, SD

= .73) and Programming (mean 5.69, SD = .65) and as fifth.

CAPLs' responses for the five highest components showed less variability on ratings than did

applicability means as shown by standard deviations. Again, as was the case among applicability

ratings, the standard deviation for Facilities, Technology, Equipment, was reported as highest among

all importance ratings.

Table V.9: Importance of CAS by Component by Summary Means

CAS Component	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Diversity	32	5.82	1.02
Financial Resources	32	5.76	.84
Legal Responsibilities	32	5.74	.82
Facilities, Technology, Equipment	32	5.72	1.08
Ethics	30	5.69	.73
Programming	31	5.69	.65
Assessment and Evaluation	32	5.67	.94
Campus and External Relations	32	5.66	.97
Mission	32	5.55	.90
Organization and Management	32	5.37	.97
Leadership	30	5.34	.66
Equity and Access	32	5.29	.93
Human Resources	31	4.90	.66

The ratings submitted for this component ranged from "Lowest Importance to Work" to "Highest Importance to Work" on the seven point scale. The frequency of the ratings for the component were reported as "4" at 15.6 percent; "5" at 28.1 percent; "6" at 25 percent; and, "7" with 31.3 percent of the CAPL responses for the component.

As was the case in research question one, all component means appeared above the mid point of the scales. Importance means skewed with more intensity to the high end of the rating scales than did those reported for applicability. However, standard deviations showed a smaller amount of variation among importance ratings than did applicability. Based upon the reported means,

Diversity, Financial Resources, Legal Responsibilities, Facilities, Technology, Equipment, Ethics

and Programming represented the components CAPLs rated as the five most important to the work

they do in campus activities.

3. Research Question 3: What differences and similarities exist in CAP leader perceptions of CAS
components' applicability and importance for the identification of benchmarks?

This question analyzed summary means for applicability and importance together to identify

benchmark components for improving the campus activities program examined. A gap score

assessment was used to measure difference between importance and applicability of respondents'

ratings to answer the question. Applicability represented the broader rating of CAPLs' perceptions of

the components for the improvement of the campus activities program as a whole. The importance

rating represented a more subjective measure relative to the importance of the component to the work

CAPLs do at various campus locations. Respondent ratings reinforced the researcher's assumptions

regarding the need compare data on the basis of the similarities and differences relative to the two

measures for the identification of the component benchmarks for the program.

Summary means reported for applicability and importance are displayed together in Table 12

by corresponding CAS component to provide greater understanding of the difference and similarities

represented in the ratings.   Importance means reported for each component pair exceeded all

applicability means on every occasion. Additionally, among all reported summary means, only one

applicability mean, Assessment and Evaluation, exceeded any other importance mean.

Table V.10: Applicability and Importance Means by Pair
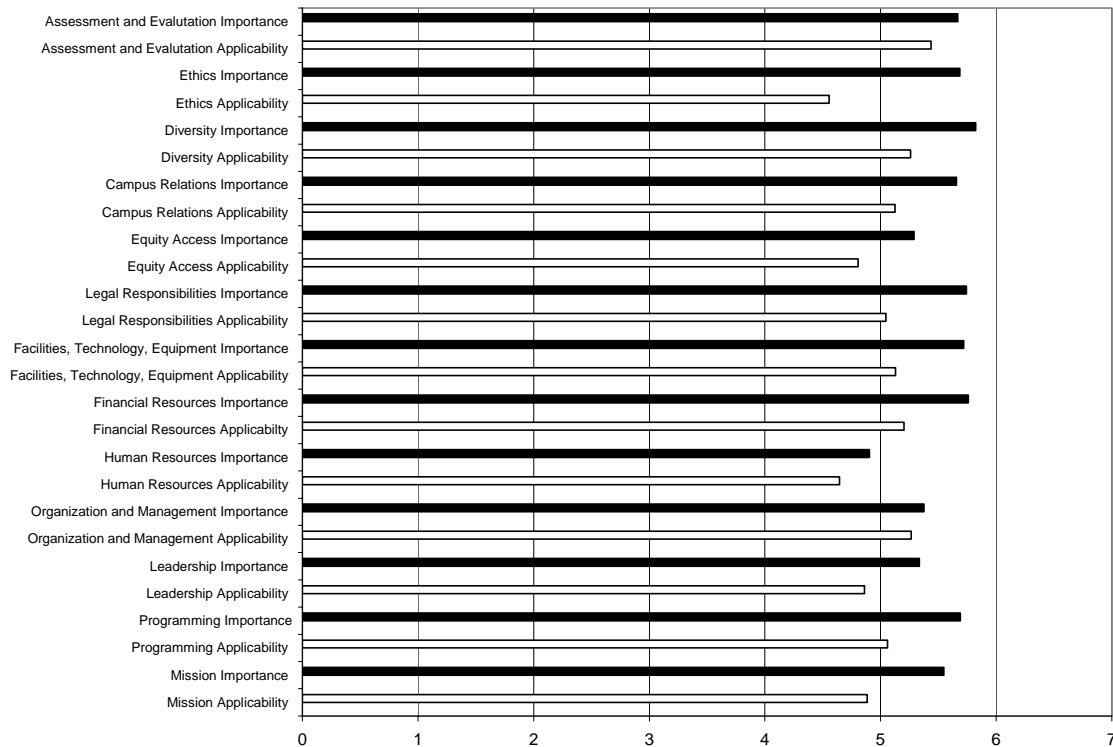
These observations clarified that importance to work was consistently rated higher than applicability to improving the program. All of the individual components examined in the study were assumed to be of equal weight since CAS presented each as criteria that every campus activities program is expected to meet with reasonable effort and diligence (Miller, 2003, p. 3). The researcher used assumptions from the student affairs benchmarking model framing the study and recommendations found in the literature to assume CAPLs' ratings of standard components' applicability to unit and importance to individual work would inform benchmark component selections to reflect needs and assure individual staff ownership within the process (Upcraft & Shuh, 1996, p.250). Ratings of importance to work were considered to be most closely associated with the individual CAPL than were ratings of applicability to improve the CAP.

The further assessment of differences and similarities of respondents' perceptions on the measures was accomplished through a gap analysis which measured the difference between the two ratings. Applicability means were subtracted from the importance means for each component to create a component gap score representing this difference. This assessment identified those component pairs for which the difference between importance and applicability summary means was most pronounced. Component pairs represented by larger scores indicated the greatest difference between respondent ratings of the component importance to the individual's work and its applicability to the larger program. The largest scores served as indicators representing the need to reduce the disparity in CAPLs' perceptions between importance and applicability in order to improve the campus activities program. Components are displayed in order of the gap score representing difference for each pair in Table 13.

Table V.11: CAS Components with Importance and Applicability Means and Gap Scores

Component	Importance	Applicability	Gap Score
Ethics	5.69	4.56	1.13
Legal Responsibilities	5.74	5.05	.69
Mission	5.55	4.88	.67
Programming	5.69	5.06	.63
Facilities, Technology, Equipment	5.72	5.13	.59
Financial Resources	5.76	5.20	.56
Diversity	5.82	5.26	.56
Campus/External Relations	5.66	5.12	.54
Equity Access	5.29	4.80	.49
Leadership	5.34	4.86	.48
Human Resources	4.90	4.64	.26
Assessment and Evaluation	5.67	5.44	.23
Organization and Management	5.37	5.27	.10

To answer the research question, the highest four and lowest three scores were examined. Ethics was reported as having the highest gap score at 1.13, followed by Legal Responsibilities at .69, with Mission as third at .67 and Programming was reported fourth at .63. These components were identified as the program benchmarks for improvement due to the difference represented as the largest scores. Closing the gap between the staff perception of improvement and applicability indicated the objective for any of the subsequent benchmarking steps extending from this study.

The greatest similarities between importance and applicability ratings were represented as the lowest gap scores and indicated the lowest priority for use as benchmarks. The lowest gap scores reported were Organization and Management (.10), Assessment and Evaluation (.23), and Human Resources (.26).

4. Research Question 4: How do demographic characteristics of campus activity program leaders relate to their perceptions of benchmarks?

This research question examined CAPLs' responses in the six demographic areas identified in the survey. Exploratory comparisons were conducted among all demographic groups on the twenty six applicability and importance scales for each respondent. Two significant effects were observed and were not reported due to the small number. Given the nature of the exploratory comparisons the results indicated these may be better addressed in future research projects. To answer the research question, the four highest and three lowest component gap scores reported for each demographic category were examined to point out the most pronounced differences. This was intended to provide additional insight into CAPLs' perceptions as they related to the campus activities program to identify any issues which may be important considerations or caveats as to the component benchmarks selected for the campus activities program.

Reported CAS component, importance and applicability summary means and gap scores were reported in Table 14. Males reported the four largest gap scores as Ethics (1.37) followed by Mission (1.12), Legal Responsibilities (.95), and Programming (.94) while Organization and

Table V.12: Component (Comp.) Importance (Imp.) and Applicability (App.) with Gap Score by Gender

	Male						Female				
Comp.	Imp.	N	App.	N	Gap Score	Comp.	Imp.	N	App.	N	Gap Score
Eth.	5.77	11	4.40	12	1.37	Eth.	5.64	19	4.65	19	0.99
Mis.	5.58	12	4.46	12	1.12	Leg. Resp.	5.84	20	5.30	20	0.54
Leg. Resp.	5.58	12	4.63	12	0.95	Fin. Res.	5.80	20	5.31	20	0.49
Prog.	5.62	12	4.68	12	0.94	Div.	5.85	20	5.38	20	0.47
Fac., Tech., Equip.	5.58	12	4.67	12	0.91	Prog.	5.74	19	5.31	18	0.43
Camp./Ext. Rel.	5.67	12	4.83	12	0.84	Fac., Tech., Equip.	5.80	20	5.42	19	0.38
Eq. Acc.	5.38	12	4.60	12	0.78	Mis.	5.53	20	5.17	18	0.36
Div.	5.78	12	5.06	12	0.72	Lead.	5.38	18	5.02	19	0.36
Fin. Res.	5.69	12	5.02	12	0.67	Camp./Ext. Rel.	5.65	20	5.30	20	0.35
Lead.	5.26	12	4.60	12	0.66	Eq. Acc.	5.24	20	4.93	20	0.31
H. R.	4.91	12	4.37	12	0.54	Asses. & Eval.	5.45	20	5.33	20	0.12
Asses. & Eval.	6.03	12	5.61	12	0.42	H. R.	4.90	19	4.81	20	0.09
Org. & Man.	5.17	12	4.83	12	0.34	Org. & Man.	5.50	20	5.53	20	-0.03

Note. Assessment and Evaluation (Asses. & Eval.), Campus/External Relations (Camp./Ext. Rel.), Diversity (Div.),

Equity Access (Eq. Acc.), Ethics (Eth.), Facilities, Technology, Equipment (Fac., Tech., Equip.), Financial Resources

(Fin. Res.), Human Resources (H. R.), Leadership (Lead.), Legal Responsibilities (Leg. Resp.), Mission (Mis.),

Organization and Management (Org. & Man.), Programming (Prog.).

Management (.34), Assessment and Evaluation (.42), and Human Resources (.54) represented the smallest scores. The largest gap scores represented for females were Ethics (.99), Legal Responsibilities (.54), Financial Resources (.49), and Diversity (.47) while Organization and Management (-.03), Human Resources (.09), and, Assessment and Evaluation (.12) were reported as lowest scores.

This indicated Ethics and Legal Responsibilities as components most in need of improvement among both males and females while Financial Resources indicated need for improvement among only females with Programming unique to males. While the overall order of lowest scores differed in order between males and females, the similar identification of Human Resources, Assessment and Evaluation, and Organization and Management as the lowest three for both groups indicated that there was general agreement on the components least in need of improvement among CAPLs based on Gender.

The reported summary means for CAPLs' ratings of CAS components and gap scores based on years of professional experience in student affairs were examined to identify similarities and differences. While a total of five professional experience categories were considered in the survey these were later condensed to represent two categories for analysis due to the broad dispersal of responses across the initial five categories. The categories "Under 2 Years" and "3-5 Years" were combined to create one category for CAPLs with under five years of professional experience. The three additional categories from the survey entitled, "6-8 Years", "8-10 Years", and, "More Than 10 Years", were combined to create the second category representing CAPLs with six or more years of professional experience. A summary of the gap scores for the professional experience categories is represented in Table 15.

Table V.13: Component (Comp.) Importance (Imp.) and Applicability (App.) with Gap Score by Professional Experience

	< 5 Years' Experience					6 > Years' Experience				
Comp.	Imp.	N	App.	N	Gap Score	Comp.	Imp.	N	App.	N	Gap Score
Eth.	5.76	18	4.46	18	1.30	Eth.	5.57	12	4.69	13	.88
Mis.	5.83	18	4.76	17	1.07	Fac., Tech., Equip.	5.79	14	4.92	13	.87
Div.	6.07	18	5.09	18	.98	Lead.	5.18	13	4.77	14	.41
Camp./Ext. Rel.	5.94	18	5.00	18	.94	Leg. Resp.	5.68	14	5.27	14	.41
Leg. Resp.	5.79	18	4.88	18	.91	Fin. Res.	5.77	14	5.43	14	.34
Prog.	5.92	17	5.05	17	.87	Prog.	5.41	14	5.08	13	.33
Eq. Acc.	5.47	18	4.71	18	.76	Asses. & Eval.	5.52	14	5.19	14	.33
Fin. Res.	5.75	18	5.03	18	.72	Mis.	5.18	14	5.04	13	.16
Lead.	5.45	17	4.94	17	.51	Eq. Acc.	5.05	14	4.93	14	.12
H. R.	5.02	17	4.59	18	.43	Org. & Man.	5.00	14	4.89	14	.11
Fac., Tech., Equip.	5.67	18	5.28	18	.39	H. R.	4.76	14	4.71	14	.05
Asses. & Eval.	5.78	18	5.63	18	.15	Div.	5.50	14	5.48	14	.02
Org. & Man.	5.67	18	5.56	18	.11	Camp./Ext. Rel.	5.29	14	5.29	14	0

Note. Assessment and Evaluation (Asses. & Eval.), Campus/External Relations (Camp./Ext. Rel.),

Diversity (Div.), Equity Access (Eq. Acc.), Ethics (Eth.), Facilities, Technology, Equipment (Fac.,

Tech., Equip.), Financial Resources (Fin. Res.), Human Resources (H. R.), Leadership (Lead.), Legal

Responsibilities (Leg. Resp.), Mission (Mis.), Organization and Management (Org. & Man.),

Programming (Prog.).

Staff members with fewer than five years of experience reported the four highest gap scores as Ethics (1.30), Mission (1.07), Diversity (.98), and Campus and External Relations (.94). Lowest scores were Organization and Management (.11), Assessment and Evaluation (.15), and Facilities, Technology, Equipment (.39). The largest gap scores reported for CAPLs with more than six years of professional experience were Ethics (.88), Facilities, Technology, Equipment (.87), both Leadership (.41) and Legal Responsibilities (.41), followed by Financial Resources (.34). Lowest gap scores reported were Campus and External Relations (0), Diversity (.02), and Human Resources (.05).

Ethics reported the highest gap score among the two professional experience categories. This indicated that all CAPLs shared perceptions associated with the need for improvement of Ethics based on professional experience. Legal Responsibilities followed as the most consistently reported high gap score among all categories. It was fourth for CAPLs with more than five years of experience and fifth overall for those with less than five years of experience. Little additional similarity was observed among the highest gap scores for the categories.

However, the report of Facilities, Technology, Equipment as the second highest gap score among CAPLs with six or more years of experience while it appeared as the third lowest score among peers with five or less years of experience demonstrated there may be factors unique to personnel associated with years of experience in student affairs which may have influenced differing perceptions.

Another difference in gap scores between the two groups was observed as Campus and External Relations appeared fourth among the highest scores for CAPLs with less than five years while it was the lowest score among those with six or more years. These results indicated perceptual differences based on years of professional experience in relation to the component.

Responses based on Race/Ethnicity reported thirty CAPLs (98%) were identified as White based upon survey response. The researcher did not feel it was appropriate to disclose specific response information for categories due to confidentiality expectations expressed for the survey and the small size of the population examined. Therefore, no data are reported. Campus Activities Program Leaders at Penn State may hold supervisory responsibilities for staff based upon campus needs and individual student affairs unit structure.

The reported gap scores based upon supervisory status within the University are reported in Table 16.

Table V.14: Component (Comp.) Importance (Imp.) and Applicability (App.) with Gap Score by Supervisory Status

	Supervisor						Non Supervisor				
Comp.	Imp.	N	App.	N	Gap Score	Comp.	Imp.	N	App.	N	Gap Score
Eth.	5.80	17	4.72	17	1.08	Eth.	5.53	13	4.36	14	1.17
Div.	6.06	18	5.24	18	.82	Prog.	5.69	14	4.92	12	.77
Leg. Resp.	5.90	18	5.17	18	.73	Camp./Ext. Rel.	5.71	14	5.00	14	.71
Mis.	5.53	18	4.89	18	.64	Mis.	5.57	14	4.88	12	.69
Eq. Acc.	5.53	18	4.90	18	.63	Fac., Tech., Equip.	5.79	14	5.14	14	.65
Fac., Tech., Equip.	5.67	18	5.12	17	.55	Leg. Resp.	5.54	14	4.89	14	.65
Fin. Res.	5.96	18	5.42	18	.54	Fin. Res.	5.50	14	4.93	14	.57
Prog.	5.69	17	5.16	18	.53	Lead.	5.08	13	4.67	13	.41
Lead.	5.53	17	5.00	18	.53	Eq. Acc.	4.98	14	4.68	14	.30
Camp./Ext. Rel.	5.61	18	5.22	18	.39	Div.	5.52	14	5.29	14	.23
Asses. & Eval.	5.83	18	5.50	18	.33	H. R.	4.65	13	4.46	14	.19
H. R.	5.09	18	4.79	18	.30	Asses. & Eval.	5.45	14	5.36	14	.09
Org. & Man.	5.53	18	5.31	18	.22	Org. & Man.	5.18	14	5.21	14	-.03

Note. Assessment and Evaluation (Asses. & Eval.), Campus/External Relations (Camp./Ext. Rel.), Diversity (Div.), Equity Access (Eq. Acc.), Ethics (Eth.), Facilities, Technology, Equipment (Fac., Tech., Equip.), Financial Resources (Fin. Res.), Human Resources (H. R.), Leadership (Lead.), Legal Responsibilities (Leg. Resp.), Mission (Mis.), Organization and Management (Org. & Man.), Programming (Prog.).

Campus Activities Program Leaders with supervisory responsibilities reported Ethics (1.08),

Diversity (.82), Legal Responsibilities (.73), and Mission (.64) as the highest four scores while

Organization and Management (.22), Human Resources (.30), and Assessment and Evaluation (.33)

were reported as lowest scores. Those with no responsibilities for staff supervision reported Ethics

(1.17), Programming (.77), Campus and External Relations (.71), and Mission (.69) highest with the

lowest scores Organization and Management (-.03), Assessment and Evaluation (.09), and Human

Resources (.19). Ethics had the overall highest gap score for both groups while Mission reported the

fourth largest score for both. This indicated these components showed matching for both groups as

benchmarks based on supervisory status. The identification of Programming and Campus and

External Relations as second and third for non supervisors while Diversity and Legal Responsibilities

were similarly ranked for supervisors indicated divergent perceptions based on supervisory status.

While Organization and Management, Human Resources, and Assessment and Evaluation

were ranked differently, these components were similarly identified as the three least in need of

improvement among both groups.

Gap scores were examined for CAPLs based upon employment status are shown in Table 17.

Standing appointments were defined as a continuing employment with no specified date ending

employment. Fixed term employment specified employment starting and ending dates defined by a

contract. CAPLs in Standing positions reported the four highest gap scores for components as Ethics

(1.12), Programming (.66), Mission (.64), and Legal Responsibilities (.60) with the three smallest

scores reported as Organization and Management (-.06), Human Resources (.21), and, Facilities,

Table V.15: Component (Comp.) Importance (Imp.) and Applicability (App.) with Gap Score by Employment Status

	Standing						Fixed Term				
Comp.	Imp.	N	App.	N	Gap Score	Comp.	Imp.	N	App.	N	Gap Score
Eth.	5.57	20	4.45	21	1.12	Fac., Tech., Equip.	6.00	10	4.70	10	1.30
Prog.	5.69	21	5.03	21	.66	Eth.	5.92	10	4.78	10	1.14
Mis.	5.52	22	4.88	21	.64	Leg. Resp.	5.93	10	5.03	10	.90
Leg. Resp.	5.66	22	5.06	22	.60	Fin. Res.	5.93	10	5.08	10	.85
Diversity	5.79	22	5.20	22	.59	Eq. Acc.	5.35	10	4.60	10	.75
Camp./Ext. Rel.	5.50	22	5.05	22	.45	Lead.	5.54	9	4.81	9	.73
Fin. Res.	5.68	22	5.26	22	.42	Mis.	5.60	10	4.89	9	.71
Lead.	5.25	21	4.88	22	.37	Camp./Ext. Rel.	6.00	10	5.30	10	.70
Eq. Acc.	5.26	22	4.90	22	.36	Prog.	5.70	10	5.13	9	.57
Asses. & Eval.	5.74	22	5.45	22	.29	Org. & Man.	5.55	10	5.05	10	.50
Fac., Tech., Equip.	5.59	22	5.33	21	.26	Div.	5.90	10	5.40	10	.50
H. R.	4.95	21	4.74	22	.21	H. R.	4.80	10	4.44	10	.36
Org. & Man.	5.30	22	5.36	22	-.06	Asses. & Eval.	5.50	10	5.40	10	.10

Note. Assessment and Evaluation (Asses. & Eval.), Campus/External Relations (Camp./Ext. Rel.), Diversity (Div.), Equity Access (Eq. Acc.), Ethics (Eth.), Facilities, Technology, Equipment (Fac., Tech., Equip.), Financial Resources (Fin. Res.), Human Resources (H. R.), Leadership (Lead.), Legal Responsibilities (Leg. Resp.), Mission (Mis.), Organization and Management (Org. & Man.), Programming (Prog.).

Technology, Equipment (.26). CAPLs in Fixed term positions reported highest gap scores as Facilities, Technology, Equipment, (1.30), Ethics (1.14), Legal Responsibilities (.90), and Financial Resources (.85) while Assessment and Evaluation (.10), Human Resources (.36), and, both Diversity (.50) and Organization and Management (.50) were lowest. The contrast of Facilities, Technology, Equipment, as the high score among Fixed term employees while it was reported among the lowest for Standing employees indicated perceptual differences based on Employment Status. Additionally, the higher score of the Mission as third among Standing employees while it appeared among the lower scores for Fixed Term employees showed perceptual differences between groups. There was identical agreement between groups on the lowest score, Organization and Management , while Assessment and Evaluation and Human Resources were also identified as among the three lowest.

Gap scores based upon the two educational degrees reported by CAPLs, Bachelors and Masters, are reported in Table 18. Campus Activities Program Leaders with Bachelors degrees reported the four highest gap scores as Ethics (1.17), Facilities, Technology, Equipment (1.10), Financial Resources (.96), and, Campus and External Relations (.90) while lowest scores were reported were Assessment and Evaluation (.20), both Diversity (.50) and Organization and Management (.50), and, Equity and Access (.53). Masters' degree holders reported Ethics (1.13), Legal Responsibilities (.64), both Mission (.59) and Diversity (.59) and Programming (.57) as highest while Organization and Management (-.07), Human Resources (.12), and Assessment and Evaluation (.24) were the lowest scores.

Table V.16: Component (Comp.) Importance (Imp.) and Applicability (App.) with Gap Score by Educational Status

	Bachelors						Masters				
Comp.	Imp.	N	App.	N	Gap Score	Comp.	Imp.	N	App.	N	Gap Score
Eth.	5.99	9	4.82	10	1.17	Eth.	5.56	21	4.43	21	1.13
Fac., Tech., Equip.	5.90	10	4.80	10	1.10	Leg. Resp.	5.74	22	5.10	22	.64
Fin. Res.	5.93	10	4.97	10	.96	Mis.	5.52	22	4.93	21	.59
Camp./Ext. Rel.	6.00	10	5.10	10	.90	Div.	5.80	22	5.21	22	.59
Mis.	5.60	10	4.78	9	.82	Prog.	5.66	21	5.09	21	.57
Leg. Resp.	5.75	10	4.93	10	.82	Eq. Acc.	5.36	22	4.90	22	.46
Prog.	5.76	10	5.00	9	.76	Fin. Res.	5.68	22	5.31	22	.37
Lead.	5.49	10	4.78	10	.71	Lead.	5.26	20	4.90	21	.36
H. R.	4.97	10	4.41	10	.56	Camp./Ext. Rel.	5.50	22	5.14	22	.36
Eq. Acc.	5.13	10	4.60	10	.53	Fac., Tech., Equip.	5.64	22	5.29	21	.35
Org. & Man.	5.75	10	5.25	10	.50	Asses. & Eval.	5.68	22	5.44	22	.24
Div.	5.87	10	5.37	10	.50	H. R.	4.87	21	4.75	22	.12
Asses. & Eval.	5.63	10	5.43	10	.20	Org. & Man.	5.20	22	5.27	22	-.07

Note. Assessment and Evaluation (Asses. & Eval.), Campus/External Relations (Camp./Ext. Rel.), Diversity (Div.), Equity Access (Eq. Acc.), Ethics (Eth.), Facilities, Technology, Equipment (Fac., Tech., Equip.), Financial Resources (Fin. Res.), Human Resources (H. R.), Leadership (Lead.), Legal Responsibilities (Leg. Resp.), Mission (Mis.), Organization and Management (Org. & Man.), Programming (Prog.).

Ethics received the highest gap score among both groups which indicated it was a component jointly identified for improvement based upon Educational status. No other components were shared

among the four high scores for both groups. Scores showed that Facilities, Technology, Equipment,

and Financial Resources, as well as Campus and External Relations were additional areas for

improvement identified among Bachelors degree holders. The contrast of Diversity as one of the

lowest components for Bachelors degree holders while it was among the highest for CAPLs with

Masters degrees demonstrated perceptual differences regarding Diversity based on Educational

status. The placement of Organization and Management and Assessment and Evaluation among the

lowest scores for both groups indicated agreement on these as least critical areas for improvement.

5. Research Question 5: What is the level of CAP leader awareness of CAS?

This question enabled the researcher to understand the degree to which CAPLs were aware of The

Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education (CAS) functional unit standards for

campus activities programs. The question asked CAPLs to characterize awareness of the CAS

functional unit standards for campus activities programs prior to survey exposure. Responses for

CAPL awareness is reported in Table 19.

Table V.17: CAPL Awareness of CAS by Participation

	N	Percent
Very Aware	11	34.4
Somewhat aware	16	50.0
Not aware	5	15.6
Total	32	100

Fifty percent of the CAPLs (n=16) indicated they were somewhat aware of the CAS

standards prior to taking the survey. Eleven respondents (34.4%) indicated that they were very aware

while 5 respondents (15.6%) indicated they were not aware. The majority of CAPLs' (84.4%)

reported some awareness of CAS functional unit standards for campus activities programs. Results

indicated that the majority of respondents were aware of the CAS standards used to define professional practices in campus activities programs.

6. Research Question 6: What benchmarks would CAP leaders suggest that are not presented in CAS?

To accomplish data collection, the participants were asked to provide comments in response to the following question: Are there any additional benchmarks not listed in the survey that you feel can be used to improve campus activities programs performances? In response, two commentary responses were received from participants. The first response stated, "Some sort of understanding for upper administration of what is successful programming." This response appeared to refer to personnel outside the scope of the campus activities programs functional unit. Therefore, it did not describe a relevant suggestion to improving campus activities programs as defined by the question. The second response submitted stated, "The involvement of University faculty in Campus Activities Programs." In reviewing the CAS standards, there were no specific references to involving faculty in campus activities program statements. However, Mission standard statements referred to the CAP need to complement the institution's academic programs and mission. As such, it appeared that the suggestion was already comprised within in the definition of CAS statements.

VI. SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

The study and research questions posed were to enable the researcher to examine and explore the utilization of CAS standards as benchmarks for campus activities programs. This was intended to expand the scope of research on the topic of benchmarking in student affairs. This chapter discusses and summarizes information discovered in the findings and clarifies the contributions the study offers to the student affairs professional as a whole. Additional areas for expanded investigation and further study are offered.

A. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

A matrix summarizing information discussed in this section for each research question is presented in Figure 2. Research questions one and two reported 13 CAS summary means representing respondent ratings of component applicability to improving the campus activities program and importance to the individual's work. The means showed CAPLs rated all 13 CAS standards highly on both measures with all means located above the mid points on seven point scales. This seemed to show a type of halo effect, which may have been the result of practitioners' recognition of the CAS standards since they are generally regarded in the student affairs profession as some of the most distinguishable quality practice guides in higher education. Importance means were both higher for every

Research Question	Measure	Summary
1. What are the perceptions of campus activities program leaders regarding the applicability of CAS components as benchmarks to improve campus activities programs?	Applicability summary means for 13 CAS component areas.	Five highest components reported were considered: 　1. Assessment and Evaluation　　　　(M = 5.44, SD = 1.14) 　2. Organization and Management　　　(M = 5.27, SD = 1.15) 　3. Diversity　　　　　　　　　　　(M = 5.26, SD = .99) 　4. Financial Resources　　　　　　　(M = 5.20, SD = .97) 　5. Facilities, Technology, Equipment　(M = 5.13, SD = 1.52) - All means rated above mid points on 7 point rating scale. - All components were applicable to improve CAP. - Findings reinforced credibility of CAS among CAPLs. - Facilities, Technology, Equipment reported the highest SD among all 13 components.
2. Which CAS components do campus activities program leaders perceive as the most important benchmarks to improve activities programs?	Importance summary means for 13 CAS component areas.	Five highest components reported were considered: 　1. Diversity　　　　　　　　　　　(M = 5.82, SD = 1.02) 　2. Financial Resources　　　　　　　(M = 5.76, SD = .84) 　3. Legal Responsibilities　　　　　　(M = 5.74, SD = .82) 　4. Facilities, Technology, Equipment　(M = 5.72, SD = 1.08) 　5. Programming　　　　　　　　　(M = 5.69, SD = .73) 　5. Ethics　　　　　　　　　　　　(M = 5.69, SD = .65) - All means rated above mid points on 7 point rating with more intensity than App. ratings. - All components were important to CAPL work in CAP. - A CAS Halo Effect was observed. - Indicated less variation among SD than Applicability. - Facilities, Technology, Equipment reported highest SD among all 13 components.
3. What differences and similarities exist in CAP leader perceptions of CAS components' applicability and importance for the identification of benchmarks?	Importance summary means – Applicability summary means = Gap score for 13 CAS component areas.	Highest scores reported greatest difference:　　Lowest scores reported greatest similarity: 　1. Ethics　　　　　　　(1.13)　　　　1. Organization and Management　(.10) 　2. Legal Responsibilities　(.69)　　　　2. Assessment and Evaluation　　(.23) 　3. Mission　　　　　　(.67)　　　　3. Human Resources　　　　　(.26) 　4. Programming　　　　(.63) - All Importance means exceeded Applicability for every component. - Lowest scores represented information, tools, and resources available to CAPL at PSU. - Finding resources described in high scores were difficult to identify in applications at PSU. - High scores represented more abstract and specialized content.

Figure VI.1: Summary Matrix for Research Questions Examined

Research Question	Measure	Summary
4. How do demographic characteristics of campus activity program leaders relate to their perceptions of benchmarks?	Importance summary means – Applicability summary means by demographic = Gap score for 6 categories.	Gap scores were compared in each demographic category. - Limited findings were indicated. - Differences identified for years of Professional Experience, Employment Status, Educational Status were explored. - The most salient finding was the repeated variation of Facilities, Technology, Equipment among demographics.
5. What is the level of CAP leader awareness of CAS?	CAPL rating awareness of CAS.	Very Aware (n=11) 34.4% Somewhat Aware (n=16) 50% Not Aware (n=5) 15.6% - 84.4% aware of standards and suggested familiarity within standards. - Considered with RQ1 and RQ2 results suggested standards are suited for use as benchmarks.
6. What benchmarks would CAP leaders suggest that are not presented in CAS?	Comments submitted by CAPL suggesting benchmarks not represented in the survey.	- Little commentary submitted, which suggested CAPLs believe CAS is comprehensive. - Comment submitted fit into defined CAS standard areas. - CAS contained needed CAP benchmark criteria and targets. - Survey fatigue could have played a role in low response.

(figure continues)

component than those reported for applicability and showed less variation among standard deviations. However, the identification of the Facilities, Technology, Equipment, as having the highest standard deviation reported among all 13 components for both the applicability and importance means suggested that CAPLs may have experienced some difficulty understanding contents of the single statement item defining the component.

Since one statement item was provided for Facilities, Technology, Equipment, this suggested it may not represent enough definition or did not contain sufficient information for less variable rating as did other components comprised of more statement items or more focused statements. Additionally, it suggested that content did not cover the three areas implied in the title. The title of the component itself seemed to infer explanation for three distinct areas but content appeared to focus primarily upon areas of facilities and equipment. The findings in research questions one and two suggested benefit for the use of the 13 CAS components as a basis from which to define benchmarks to improve campus activities programs due to the credibility implied among respondents represented as the high ratings reported.

While the top component applicability means identified in research question one (Assessment and Evaluation, Organization and Management, Diversity, Financial Resources, Facilities, Technology, Equipment) showed some overlap with top importance means from question two (Diversity, Financial Resources, Legal Responsibilities, Facilities, Technology, Equipment, Programming and Ethics), the recommendation of the overall campus activities program benchmarks defining what to improve required further analysis to understand the relations represented by the differing summary means for the measures.

The similarities and differences represented by the applicability and importance means were examined in question three. The findings for the research question identified the priority of approximate CAS benchmarks (Ethics, Legal Responsibilities, Mission and Programming) to be used for the improvement of the campus activities program examined based upon an analysis of the mean

differences. This was accomplished through the assignment of gap scores to create improvement

priorities for each of the 13 components. The higher the reported score, the greater the indication and

need for improvement as defined by the content of the component. The identification of these

component benchmarks indicated the further research, to target and locate best practices as described

by the CAS content to improve the campus activities program examined.

The gap score or "difference score" used in the study is a commonly utilized organization

and management assessment to describe conditions of person/environment fit, employee/organization

values, and, matching employee expectations and experiences (Edwards, 2001). The score utilized in

the study was a representation of the difference between the two primary measures examined for

each component: importance and applicability. The gap scores represented an absolute difference

score $(X - Y)$ between measures. While caveats were observed regarding use of difference scores to

describe organization conditions, the researcher addressed concerns by grounding the analysis in a

clear theoretical base observed in the literature (Tisak & Smith, 1994). In this case, the literature in

benchmarking and organization management recognized the importance of engaging individual

"front line" staff member perceptions as a primary planning reference point for unit assessments to

effect organizational change at this level. Therefore, applicability summary means were subtracted

from importance to represent this issue in the calculation of the gap score exemplifying the difference

between importance and applicability measures for each of the 13 CAS components.

The use of the data to construct difference scores in this manner from the personnel examined

was not "predicated on whim or the easiest analytical approach" (Tisak & Smith, p.267, 1994) as

cautioned against in the literature. Rather, the assessment approach was conceived to capture

conceptual difference represented between the CAPLs' ratings of each CAS components' importance

to the individual's work and the worker's perception of its applicability to the larger program (Tisak

& Smith, 1994).   While the usefulness of the scores extracted were situational and come from a case

study group, they were important to examine, expand and evolve research in this area to explore factors identified as important to benchmarking in student affairs.

The findings in research question three suggested that proportionally, the components representing the largest gap scores indicated the greatest opportunity for improvement of campus activities programs due to the difference represented between the ratings. The larger gap scores may have been due to the abstract nature of the components identified or that respondents did not observe distinct University resources for those areas. Therefore, improvement in rating disparity could be achieved by raising the CAPL's awareness of applications via the adaptation of external best practices models into the CAP which exemplify the CAS component content.

The components with the lowest gap scores which indicated the least need for improvement were Organization and Management, Assessment and Evaluation, and Human Resources. These components seemed to represent contents for which existing University resources were more visible and accessible to the CAPL through current offices and offerings such as training and development and Web-based resources available to all staff. Components with the smallest scores suggested areas for which information, tools, structures, and resources were already available to staff within the program examined. For example, the CAPL could experience Organization and Management as defined in the CAS component as "policies and procedures, written performance expectations… organizational charts, and clearly stated service delivery expectations" (Miller, 2003, p.55) through standardized University structures, policies and procedures. The researcher observed such resources as Web access portals and clearly defined support offices accessed directly from the main University Web page. These assets appeared to have a high profile and were pronounced, relevant and accessible to staff members. This suggested that the components identified by lowest scores made sense as those least in need of improvement since they were observed as highly visible resources already available in applications observed in support of all University staff members. Contrastingly, it appeared that locating similar resources for Ethics, Legal Responsibilities, Mission, and

Programming within the University as described by the components would be considerably more difficult to identify in practice as observable applications and support resources in the University.

Research question four examined gaps scores representing differences between importance and applicability summary means for each demographic category examined in the survey. The findings based upon this information did not reveal a great deal of information for interpretation due to the small size of the sample. However, some considerations and caveats emerged based upon the scores reported within three categories. These examinations were based upon the most pronounced differences observed within high and low gap scores defined by each category.

Campus Activities Program Leaders with more than six years of experience reported Facilities, Technology, Equipment, as having the second highest gap score. In contrast, this component appeared among the lowest for peers with less than five years of experience. This represented the need for the consideration of perceptual differences with regard to these factors based on the differing perceptions of the suitability of facilities, technology and equipment. However, concerns regarding the suitability of the component were considerations reinforced in earlier findings regarding potential content issues.

Additionally, divergence between the two professional experience groups on the Campus and External Relations score suggested the need to consider why CAPLs with six or more years of experience indicated it as the lowest score while the lower experience peers reported it among the highest. However, the high score seemed to make sense since less experienced staff would likely place strong priority upon finding fit in positions on campus. As new professionals they would be more likely to seek "establish, maintain, and promote effective relations with relevant individuals, campus offices and external agencies" (Miller, 2003, p.57) as defined by the component due to typical adaptation to the position and profession.

Findings from among Fixed Term employees reported the highest gap score as Facilities, Technology, Equipment, while it was reported among the lowest for Standing Employee peers. This

suggested divergence in how CAPLs perceived aspects of its importance and applicability. Additionally, it seemed to reinforce findings from earlier research questions regarding the variability in staff ratings regarding the component. Some incongruence between these groups on the Mission component suggested the need to examine differences based on employment status. Issues may be due to the nature of the positions themselves since Fixed Term positions were generally created to fit budgetary constraints, semester calendars, to employ staff during completion of graduate studies, or fill temporary assignments while a Standing employee was on leave. Regardless of employment status, staff members were often responsible for similar work packages. Therefore, differences observed represented considerations which may impact improvement efforts.

Results based upon Educational Status found in research question four suggested the most pronounced differences between groups related to Diversity. The component was reported as the second lowest gap score for CAPLs with Bachelors degrees while it is among the highest for those with a Masters degree. This suggested there may be unique factors based on educational preparation which represented perceptual differences between groups. This may be particularly relevant to the program examined due to the lack of racial diversity represented in the study group. Additionally, student affairs personnel are generally regarded both in CAS standards and the unit examined as needing to advocate and exemplify values related to this area. Therefore, the finding may be an important caveat or area of concern related to the incongruence found among these staff based on education.

Overall, there appeared to be consistency represented within demographic findings reviewed for research question four which reflected the continuity of Ethics, Legal Responsibilities, Mission, and, Programming as the campus activities programs benchmarks as previously identified.

Research question five found eighty four percent of CAPLs indicated they were at least "Somewhat Aware" of CAS standards prior to participation in the survey. This seemed to be a relatively high representation of staff awareness. When considered with findings from research

questions one and two, these findings suggested the 13 CAS standards examined were suited for use

a benchmarks. However, the report of sixteen percent of the group as having indicated they were not

aware of CAS functional unit standards for campus activities programs also suggested an area of

concern. This pointed to additional initial training needs within the program to ensure all staff

members were aware of CAS in preparation for any next steps in benchmarking to ensure ownership

and understanding of standards.

The response found for research question six combined with the replication of content

already defined within the standards suggested that CAPLs observed CAS as a suitable content

framework for the identification of benchmarks needed to improve campus activities programs. This

added support to findings in research questions one, two, three and four which identified the CAS

components as suitable benchmarks. However, another issue may be the placement of the question as

last in the survey. This may not have been a good location as CAPLs may have skipped over it in

order to end the survey. This additional observation suggested that the use of commentary

submission in the survey may not be advisable in its present format or location if survey fatigue

occurred.

B. CONCLUSIONS

The first research question represented the broader measure of Campus Activity Program Leaders'

opinions regarding the applicability of The Council for the Advancement of Standards components

for the improvement of the campus activities program as a whole. The question provided data

finding CAPLs observed the CAS components as criteria applicable as benchmarks for the

improvement of the campus activities program examined. While more significant variations of rating

intensity were demonstrated for components with the highest summary means, an important finding

is that the personnel examined recognized the content presented by CAS as defining applicable quality improvement practices. However, there was no information to suggested how this population compared to other programs outside the study with respect to this finding. The study data represented a population from which future comparisons of practitioner perceptions regarding the applicability of CAS components to campus activities programs can be made. This finding also reinforced general assumptions observed in the profession regarding credibility associated with the CAS standards.

The second research question was an individual measure which asked the CAPL to rate CAS component importance to the work they do in the campus activities program. These component summary means were reported higher overall for each component than those for applicability. There was no information observed the literature suggesting how other populations of CAPLs perceived the importance of standards to the work they do. Variations on the intensity of the highest ratings were reported but there was no basis upon which the researcher could compare this population with other similar groups in the profession. The findings reflected the consistency demonstrated in research question one to indicate that staff studied recognized the standards as defining fundamental quality practices for campus activities programs. This was consistent with general representations found in the profession identifying the CAS standards as some of the most recognizable and broadly utilized guides for quality practices in student affairs.

Another important finding was the identification of the Facilities, Technology, Equipment, component as having the highest standard deviation reported for both applicability and importance ratings. This indicated the need for expanding content and definition for the standard. The researcher identified that the area was not sufficient to cover the range of content implied in its title and appeared to provide more of an overview for two distinct areas. Dependent upon CAPL perspective, the component may have been interpreted very differently. The standard seemed to focus on facilities with equipment as a subset with less substantive content focused upon technology

issues. The rapid development and deployment of technology in higher education may represent one of the largest factors redefining needs, quality, scope and delivery of services in student affairs over the past five years. This signaled the need to expand the practice definition in the technology area.

Findings for research question three were important to the campus activities program examined and profession as they identified a system for prioritizing the CAS standards as approximate benchmarks within the first steps in the Upcraft and Shuh (1996) benchmarking model. The gap score analysis prioritized components and created an assessment application for the CAS standards meeting needs observed in the literature (Upcraft & Shuh, 1996, p. 252). The researcher worked in the campus activities program examined for more than ten years and the results of the gap analysis conducted made sense based upon the assets and resources observed as accessible to the CAPL through the University studied. For those components that reported the highest gap scores (Ethics, Legal Responsibilities, Mission, and Programming) the important finding for the program was the need to focus on these component ranking priorities for further benchmarking activities to improve the program. The most important finding resulting from the data for the profession was the difference represented in CAPLs' perceptions of CAS component importance to individual work and applicability to the program.

The need to close the gap to enhance performance requires improving CAPL ratings related to perceptions of component applicability to the campus activities program. The critical finding is that the components identified with highest gap scores must become more relevant, tangible and observable within campus activities programs. In the unit studied, the identification of best practice models for the components with the highest gap scores was warranted. While the researcher observed that findings relative to the selection of individual component benchmarks among other populations of CAPLs may differ, the implementation of any high-quality benchmarking effort in any program unit would require significant resources and effort regardless of location and organization conditions. As such, the study represented an assessment technique to engage staff in

the initial steps in benchmarking in a "bottom up" process to identify benchmarks as targets for program improvement.

The finding that the staff studied viewed these components as most important overall to the work they do but did not similarly perceive how these components applied to the campus activities program presents an implication for the profession. A drawback to the CAS standards is limiting usage to more traditional assessment activities such as accreditation and program evaluation. The researcher recommends that the profession and practitioner observe the use of the CAS standards as approximate benchmarks to inform unit benchmarking in the functional area. The further identification of best practice programs and services as defined in the study by the CAS standards criteria represent opportunities to link theory and practice together in student affairs. These types of linkages would demonstrate and inform the applicability of the standards via the observation of best practice models, programs, and services as defined by the CAS components.

During the course of this study, the researcher observed several organizations in the private sector which served as central "hubs" for industry standards and best practices programs for quality improvement. These organizations provided resources listings of best practice organizations within a given industry based upon established standards, products or generally established quality criterion. The researcher therefore recommends that CAS consider providing the profession with similar relevant and tangible examples of program and service applications in student affairs organizations based upon the approximate CAS benchmarks described in this study. Representing student affairs "industry" best practices of the CAS standards by component within college and university campus programs and services as models for the profession would provide much needed theory to practice links for the practitioner.

To further illustrate this finding, the researcher observed a specific example of how this might be accomplished. In the course of this study, the researcher discovered the Texas A & M Web site created to assist campus activities personnel there in response to the bonfire tragedy which

claimed the lives of twelve students (Facilitator Model of Risk Management, 2005). The content of this Web site seemed to exemplify a critical best practice for campus activities programs which is perhaps an "industry standard" as defined by the CAS Legal Responsibilities component. The researcher recommends that CAS consider providing other component-specified examples of best practice programs and services based upon the 13 areas defined. These types of campus activities best practices by component might be collected and reviewed through CAS member associations based upon functional areas. For campus activities programs, the Association of College Unions International (ACUI) and the National Association of Campus Activities (NACA) may be the appropriate bodies to due to traditional support of campus activities programs personnel. Utilizing CAS as a the root or de facto source for approximate benchmarks for the profession to assemble and exemplify best practices by component makes a great deal of sense due to its established centrality, credibility and the culture of student affairs which identifies the Council as an important central location for practice and assessment information.

The fourth research question examined how demographic characteristics of campus activity program leaders related to their perceptions of benchmarks. The second highest gap scores for CAPLs with six or more years of professional experience in student affairs showed Facilities, Technology, Equipment, as a component most in need of improvement. This finding is important to the program examined since the staff members with the most experience identified component applicability to program and importance to work differently than did less experienced peers. The implication is that time in the profession or university has some effect on these perceptions. However, other findings clarified possible problems related to the content of the component.

While it seems basic, findings related to years of professional experience suggest campus activities programs need to focus attention to assisting CAPLs with less than five years of experience in understanding, establishing and creating relations with individuals, offices and external groups.

The importance to the profession seemed evident as a common sense need to focus on integrating less experienced staff members into existing campus and community networks.

Within the demographic information examining Fixed Term and Standing employees, Facilities, Technology, Equipment, was identified as the highest gap score for employees in contracted positions. The fact that Standing employee peers identified the same component among the lowest gap scores is an important finding as it points to a split in ratings between two classifications of employees responsible for many of the same types of duties, programs and services. This is an important finding for the program indicating that differences between these two types of employee and points to the need to further consider the role employment status plays within improvement efforts relative to the component content. However, it was noted that other factors may have played a role given the issues noted for the component.

The findings on Educational status of CAPLs showed differences for Diversity gap scores among those with Bachelors and Masters Degrees. This indicated the need for the program studied to consider what this divergence represented relative to any improvement efforts if it were to consider diversity issues as a critical aspect to quality improvement. Due to the affirmative emphasis placed upon this area within the unit examined and in the profession as a whole, it may represent broader concern for the program.

The caveats identified in the findings relative to the implementation of the benchmarks for improving campus activities programs showed years of experience in student affairs, employee status, and educational status presenting the greatest differentiation within the demographic categories examined based on the reported gap scores. The researcher recommends the most salient implication evolving from research question four for the profession was the repeated variation observed for gaps scores reported for the Facilities, Technology, Equipment within the demographic data examined. The researcher suggests this component may require further evaluation within CAS relative to expanding content and definition.

The fifth research question examined the level of respondent awareness of CAS functional unit standards for campus activities programs. The question was to describe potential issues that existed or assumptions made relative to the population and the standards examined. The study found that CAPLs were aware of the CAS standards used to define professional practices in campus activities programs prior to exposure on the survey. This finding, when considered with the findings from research questions one and two support the utilization of the CAS framework as a basis from which to define the campus activities unit benchmarks due to staff familiarity with CAS functional unit standards. This finding was important to the profession as it suggested that CAS standards are recognized by "front line" practitioners and validates use in new assessment techniques focused upon impacting the work of these professionals due to established credibility and recognition among them. However, some concern was noted as a need to ensure the staff examined may need some additional training related to CAS standards content. Before additional steps in benchmarking advance in the program, it is important that all staff become familiar with improvement benchmark component criteria to maximize improvement efforts.

The sixth research question sought the identification of benchmarks suggested by CAPLs which were not presented in the survey through the submission of written comment.   The findings relative to this question were mixed. The lack of commentary submitted indicated that CAPLs viewed CAS content represented in the survey sufficient to describe needed benchmarks for the campus activities program. However, an alternative observation found the location of the question within the survey may not be suited for the collection of such information due to survey fatigue. While these results were mixed, an important finding was that the content needed to define campus activities programs benchmarks are comprehensive and contained within CAS standards. This evidence supported representations of CAS found in the profession and other research questions examined in the study.

C. IMPLICATIONS

The need to expand assessment activities in student affairs utilizing the CAS standards to inform such efforts is evident. The first steps of benchmarking as engaged in the study used an assessment method which presented the opportunity to transform professional standards into benchmarks targeting areas for improvement. This concept presented the opportunity to expand these prescriptions for quality practice into applications and actions within campus activities programs and other student affairs units to improve quality and performance. This study developed initial steps toward these goals. While the study examined campus activities programs within one multi-campus University, it presented implications for other CAP programs and student affairs as well since other CAS functional unit standards are similarly framed according to the areas examined. The need to learn more about the needs of "front line" practitioners and how the professional standards may be utilized in new ways through planning efforts identifying "what to benchmark" (Upcraft & Shuh, 1996) to improve the quality of programs and services via benchmarking in student affairs are clear.

D. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER STUDY

The study explored an area in student affairs in need of additional research and provided a basis for the further exploration of issues regarding benchmarking in campus activities programs and the student affairs profession. Therefore, suggestions representing several opportunities for additional study are posed in a hierarchy of recommendations.

Due to its central identity and credibility within student affairs, recommendations regarding the CAS standards may have the greatest and most immediate impact and affect upon practices in profession as a whole. The Facilities, Technology, Equipment, component should be studied and

expanded as there are opportunities for additional clarification and direction. Exploration of additional content for the component or the creation of a Technology component itself would strengthen the standards and inform the profession.

Additional research should be conducted on ways the Council can identify, illustrate and showcase best practices models and programs defined by its 13 areas for CAP. This may be viewed as an opportunity to expand its central assessment role in student affairs. By broadening scope beyond the dissemination of CAS standards and self- assessment it could become a centralized "clearinghouse" for best practice programs, services and resources as defined by its standards and expand its overall impact on quality of student affairs in higher education.

Due to the smaller scope of this study and the fact that the research recognized the limitations to which any results could be generalized to other populations of campus activities personnel and programs, more research in the area should be conducted. The skew of ratings to the high ends of the seven point scales used in the study indicate it would be important to measure the variation represented on the end points to more precisely measure ratings of applicability and importance in future surveys. Further studies should first consider the use of a ten point scale to better demonstrate variation in ratings among respondents. From there, the replication of the survey and exploration of issues observed within other populations of CAPLs would be important. Conducting the survey in other multi-campus university systems and state systems could be valuable to further understanding benchmarks, benchmarking and personnel needs in the areas.

It would be important to consider the diversity of personnel represented in any future study as no data was reported based on racial or ethnic group here. The CAS components illustrate Diversity as a critical criterion for practice, evaluation and assessment in student affairs. It would be interesting to study a more diverse population of professionals to see how ratings related to this particular component as well as among the areas.

Future applications of the survey and studies should explore how CAPL membership in relevant professional groups supporting the training and development of these personnel such as the Association of College Unions International (ACUI) and the National Association of Campus Activities (NACA) would compare to non-members based on a similar study.

The next recommendations are suggestions for the further clarification and expansion of benchmarking in student affairs by exploring the CAS standards as student affairs benchmarks using alternative methods.

Focus groups examining each of the component areas examined should be used collect perceptions of CAPLs regarding the importance and applicability of the CAS standards as benchmarks. Comparisons using this type of data could then be used in functional unit decision making in concert with survey data to identify benchmarks.

An additional method for measuring CAPLs' perceptions to identify CAS benchmarks based on the 13 areas may be obtained by utilizing the structure presented in the survey with a ranking system rather than rating scales to prioritize the CAS components. Further study should examine the use of ranking systems to identify component suitability as benchmarks.

The survey was lengthy, which may have led to fatigue. Further simplification or reduction of the survey into more primary content items or presenting only certain component areas at one time should be examined. Another reduction could be accomplished via further exploration of individual CAS standards statement items to refine and identify detailed subsets of information specific to each component area.

The CAPLs examined in the study identified awareness of the standards at 84 percent reporting they were at least somewhat aware of the functional unit standards prior to exposure. While the rating seemed high the indication of 16 percent reporting they were not aware presented concern. It would be interesting to further expand the study of this issue to determine the level, scope and depth of staff awareness of CAS separate from any exposure to the standards.

Survey fatigue may have played a role in the lack of benchmarks suggested by the CAPL for the campus activities program. Studies which seek additional benchmark content based upon staff disclosures should consider focus groups. This type of qualitative study should explore CAPL perceptions of benchmarks important to work and applicable to the larger program based on the 13 areas structured in this inquiry. An analysis of content could be used to relate practitioner disclosures within CAS component areas. Gaps in content could be identified based on a lack of CAPL identification of issues or content represented. Another approach could be utilizing focus groups with limited exposure to the CAS standards. By providing only the component area titles and asking CAPLs fill in contents, additional information may be discovered.

Any empirical study further exploring the interactions of demographic information represented should focus on the areas which posed the greatest differences. These areas were years of experience, employment status, and educational status. It would seem that these categories and the findings observed some of the most likely areas in which future studies would find interesting due to the divergence of high and low scores. Additional research regarding years of experience should explore differences among staff based on content described in the Facilities, Technology, Equipment component. CAPL scores based upon educational status suggest additional study explore differences represented among the staff with Bachelors and Masters Degrees with regard to perceptions of Diversity. Divergence in scores among fixed-term (contract) and standing personnel regarding Mission suggest there may be perceptual issues in need of further examination.

For the program examined, the next logical progression is to extend the data collected into the next steps of the benchmarking process. As such, the need to identify best practices as defined by the benchmark content to improve the program is needed. It would be interesting to partner with other Big Ten institutions based on the benchmarks identified to complete a project among these institutions. A follow up study examining the CAPL population studied after the completion of the benchmarking process to determine whether or not significant improvement occurred would be

important to discover whether or not the highest benchmark component gap scores were closed. Reporting on the entire benchmarking cycle in the program examined would provide needed insights for the profession.

E. SUMMARY

The purpose of this study was to examine an area of student affairs in need of additional research. To accomplish the study, six research questions were posed. The findings and significant issues impacting the program examined and the student affairs profession were discussed and explored. As a campus activities program leader, the researcher reviewed much of the literature on benchmarking in the private sector and the volume of information growing on the topic in higher education. Advocacy and emphasis for its expansion in student affairs has emerged since the late 1990's. Most information about benchmarking in student affairs described large institutional studies conducted by professional organizations, consortia and external consulting firms while little portrayed how it could unfold within the individual student affairs functional area.

The researcher found the literature identified the importance of considering organizational cultural factors and engaging input and feedback from the "front line" personnel to be affected by benchmarking as critical success factors in its initial planning. Little information observed how the involvement of these personnel and consideration of such factors could be accomplished within the first steps if benchmarking to define what needed improvement within in the functional unit. The study brought these issues together to initiate and organize the first steps in a process within a university campus activities program.

This study utilized a definition (Bryan, 1996), professional standards (Miller, 2003), and a model (Upcraft and Shuh, 1996) developed for the student affairs profession to construct a staff-

focused process engaging the initial steps in benchmarking to identify quality improvement benchmarks defining "what to benchmark" (Upcraft & Shuh, p. 244, 1996). This study found that the perceptions of front line staff and the most recognizable professional standards in student affairs can be utilized to identify approximate profession-defined benchmarks as the preliminary steps for benchmarking in campus activities programs

APPENDIX A

IRB APPROVALS

Subject: Approval Notification for IRB#19398 "CAS Standards Survey of Penn State Student Affairs Professionals"
Date: Tue, 31 Aug 2004 22:59:22 -0400
X-MS-Has-Attach: yes
X-MS-TNEF-Correlator:
Thread-Topic: Approval Notification for IRB#19398 "CAS Standards Survey of Penn State Student Affairs Professionals"
Thread-Index: AcSPz66PpyQgFMW3Ra+pIfZ0VNff7Q==
X-PH: V4.1@f04n07
From: "Gardner, Jackie" <jkg10@psu.edu>
To: <clr4@psu.edu>
Cc: <tiw104@psu.edu>
X-Virus-Scanned: by amavisd-new
Dear Mr. Rizzo:

Your submitted application for the new human participant study titled, "CAS Standards Survey of Penn State Student Affairs Professionals" (IRB#19398) has been approved; therefore, you may begin your research.

The approval date is 08/31/04 and the expiration date is 08/29/05. You will receive an approval letter in the mail shortly.

Attached is your Informed Consent Form with the approval statement (you will also receive a copy in the mail with your approval letter). Please ensure that this consent form is used to enroll new participants.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at jkg10@psu.edu.

Thank you,

Jackie
Jackie Gardner, M.S.
Office for Research Protections
The Pennsylvania State University
212 Kern Graduate Building
University Park, PA 16802
Phone: (814) 865-1775
Fax: (814) 863-8699
http://www.research.psu.edu/orp/

Statement of Consent to Participate in the Study:
The Pennsylvania State University

You are being asked to provide general information about yourself and your opinions. This information will not be used for an evaluation of you or your campus programs and services. The questions seek your perceptions and opinions based upon your experience as a campus activities program leader.

The survey is hosted on the Internet and it will take about 15 minutes to complete the questions. There are no risks in participating in this research beyond those experienced in everyday life.

The survey does not ask for any information that would identify who the responses belong to and responses are recorded anonymously. If this research is published, no information that would identify you will be written since your name is in no way linked to your responses. Your confidentiality will be maintained to the degree permitted by the technology used. Specifically, no guarantees can be made regarding the interception of data sent via the Internet by any third parties.

You can ask questions about the research. The person in charge will answer your questions. Contact Chris Rizzo (814) 898-6171 or clr4@psu.edu with questions. If you have questions about your rights as a research participant, contact the Penn State Office for Research Protections at (814) 865-1775. You do not have to participate in this research. You do not have to answer any questions you do not want to answer.

You must be 18 years of age or older to consent to participate in this research study. Completion and return of the survey through the Web site implies that you have read the consent information and agree to participate in this research.

This statement of consent (IRB#19398) was reviewed and approved by the Office of Research Protections at The Pennsylvania State University on 08/31/04 and will expire on 08/29/05 (JKG).

Please print this Statement of Consent for your records and future reference.

Please follow the link below to begin the survey.

      http://www...(TBA upon activation)

University of Pittsburgh
Institutional Review Board

3500 Fifth Avenue
Suite 105
Pittsburgh, PA 15213
Phone: 412.383.1480
Fax: 412.383.1146
e-mail: irbexempt@msx.upmc.edu

Exempt and Expedited Reviews
Christopher M. Ryan, Ph.D., Vice Chair

TO: Christopher Rizzo

FROM: Christopher M. Ryan, Ph.D., Vice Chair   *Chris*

DATE: September 23, 2004

PROTOCOL: CAS Standards Survey of Penn State Student Affairs Professionals

IRB Number: 0409086

The above-referenced protocol has been reviewed by the University of Pittsburgh
Institutional Review Board. Based on the information provided in the IRB protocol, this
project meets all the necessary criteria for an exemption, and is hereby designated as
"exempt" under section 45 CFR 46.101(b)(2).

The regulations of the University of Pittsburgh IRB require that exempt protocols be re-
reviewed every three years. If you wish to continue the research after that time, a new
application must be submitted.

- If any modifications are made to this project, please submit an 'exempt
  modification' form to the IRB.

- Please advise the IRB when your project has been completed so that it may be
  officially terminated in the IRB database.

- This research study may be audited by the University of Pittsburgh Research
  Conduct and Compliance Office.

Approval Date: September 23, 2004
Renewal Date: September 23, 2007

CR:ky

APPENDIX B

REQUEST AND APPROVAL TO REPRINT CAS STANDARDS

Date: Fri, 07 Jan 2005 15:49:59 -0500
To: PhyllisMable@aol.com
From: Chris Rizzo <clr4@psu.edu>
Subject: Permission to Reprint CAS - Campus Activities Programs Standards
Bcc: clr4@psu.edu

January 7, 2005

CAS
C/O - Phyllis Mable
One Dupont Circle NW Suite 300
Washington, DC, 20036-1188
Phone - 202.862.1400

Dear Phyllis,

Thanks for talking with me on the phone. As I stated, I am a student completing a doctoral
dissertation at the University of Pittsburgh entitled, Utilizing The Council for the Advancement of
Standards in Higher Education Components as Benchmarks for Campus Activities Programs. This is
study of staff members working at the Pennsylvania State University in the campus activities area.
The survey used asks them to rate their individual opinions regarding CAS campus activities
standards statements relative to the work they do at Penn State. I would like permission to reprint the
general Campus Activities program standards listed in pages 52 - 59 of The 2003 Book of
Professional Standards for Higher Education.

This permission would extend to any future revisions and editions of my dissertation, including non-
exclusive world rights in all languages, to the electronic publication of my dissertation by the
University of Pittsburgh, and to the prospective publication of my dissertation by Bell and Howell.
Bell and Howell may supply copies of my dissertation on demand. These rights will in no way
restrict republication of the material in any other form by you or by others authorized by you. Your
confirmation of this E-mail will also confirm that The Council for the Advancement of Standards in
Higher Education (CAS) owns the copyright to the above-described material.

If these arrangements meet with your approval, please return this email indicating that the use is
permitted.

Thank you so very much.
Chris Rizzo
4014 Myrtle Street
Erie, PA
16508
814.898.6484 - Day/814.864.5961 - Evening
E-mail - clr4@psu.edu

Date: Mon, 10 Jan 2005 12:19:52 -0500
From: Jan Arminio <jlarmi@ship.edu>
User-Agent: Mozilla/5.0 (Windows; U; Windows NT 5.1; en-US; rv:1.4) Gecko/20030624
Netscape/7.1 (ax)
X-Accept-Language: en-us, en
To: clr4@psu.edu, phyllisMable@aol.com
Subject: Using CAS Standards for dissertation
X-Ship-MailScanner-Information: Please contact the ISP for more information
X-Ship-MailScanner: Found to be clean
X-MailScanner-F-Address: jlarmi@ship.edu
X-Virus-Scanned: amavisd-sophos
X-PSU-Spam-Flag: NO
X-PSU-Spam-Hits: -1.524

Dear Chris,

Thank you for your interest in conducting your doctoral research using the CAS Standards. As
president of CAS, I am authorizing permission for you to reprint the Campus Activities Standards as
written in the 2003 Book of Professional standards according to the email message you sent to
Phyllis Mable on 1/7/2005.

--
Jan Arminio, Ph.D.
1871 Old Main Drive
Department of Counseling
Shippensburg University
Shippensburg, PA 17257
717-477-1676

APPENDIX C

STUDY PARTICIPATION REQUEST

I am writing you to request your participation in my doctoral research study examining the applicability of the Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education (CAS) components as benchmarks for campus activities programs. Your opinions regarding the applicability and importance of the components will serve as an initial step informing possible quality improvement initiatives for the Pennsylvania State University and may assist similar planning efforts within the profession. While the questionnaire replicates statements established by the Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education (CAS) this research is completely independent. Your participation in the survey is accessed through the Web site listed below. Please read the statement of consent below before linking to the Web site as you are agreeing to these terms upon your entry and submission of results. Please complete the survey by Friday, November 12, 2004.

Many thanks for your willingness to participate.

Statement of Consent to Participate in the Study:
The Pennsylvania State University

You are being asked to provide general information about yourself and your opinions. This information will not be used for an evaluation of you or your campus programs and services. The questions seek your perceptions and opinions based upon your experience as a campus activities program leader.

The survey is hosted on the Internet and it will take about 15 minutes to complete the questions. There are no risks in participating in this research beyond those experienced in everyday life.

The survey does not ask for any information that would identify who the responses belong to and responses are recorded anonymously. If this research is published, no information that would identify you will be written since your name is in no way linked to your responses. Your confidentiality will be maintained to the degree permitted by the technology used. Specifically, no guarantees can be made regarding the interception of data sent via the Internet by any third parties.

You can ask questions about the research. The person in charge will answer your questions. Contact Chris Rizzo (814) 898-6171 or clr4@psu.edu with questions. If you have questions about your rights as a research participant, contact the Penn State Office for Research Protections at (814) 865-1775. You do not have to participate in this research. You do not have to answer any questions you do not want to answer.

You must be 18 years of age or older to consent to participate in this research study. Completion and return of the survey through the Web site implies that you have read the consent information and agree to participate in this research.

This statement of consent (IRB#19398) was reviewed and approved by the Office of Research Protections at The Pennsylvania State University on 08/31/04 and will expire on 08/29/05 (JKG).

Please print this Statement of Consent for your records and future reference.

Please follow the link below to begin the survey.

http://www.survey.zgi?p=WEB223W4VCEVLH

APPENDIX D

SURVEY INSTRUMENT

Applicability and Importance of the CAS Components as Benchmarks for Campus Activities Programs

The purpose of this survey is to identify your perceptions, as a campus activities program leader, of the applicability and importance of the Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education (CAS) components for Campus Activities Programs (CAP) as benchmarks for campus activities programs. Your opinions regarding the applicability and importance of particular CAS standards statements will be measured and analyzed to identify components which may be used as benchmarks upon which PSU campus activities programs can improve performances.

The study utilizes 13 component areas defined by CAS for Campus Activities Programs as the basis of this questionnaire. For the purposes of this study, benchmarking is defined as the following:

Benchmarking - The purpose of this process is to identify a standard (benchmark) against which an organization can measure and improve their way of performing some task or role (Bryan, 1996, p. 40).

While the questionnaire provides professional standards statements established by the Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education (CAS) for Campus Activities Programs (CAP), this research is completely independent from the CAS. The questionnaire exactly replicates contents represented in the CAS standards.

You are being asked to provide general information about yourself and your opinions. This information will not be used for an evaluation of you or your campus programs and services. The questions seek your perceptions and opinions based upon your experience as a campus activities program leader.

SECTION I

Instructions - Please provide demographic information for these questions.

1. Gender: Male
                          Female

2. Years of professional experience in student affairs:
        Fewer than 2 years
        3 through 5 years
        6 through 8 years
        8 through 10 years
        More than 10 years

3. Race/Ethnic Group:
        American Indian or Alaskan Native
        Asian or Pacific Islander
        Black
        Hispanic or Latino
        White
        Other, please specify_____

4. Supervisory status:
        I have supervisory responsibilities for staff
        I do not have supervisory responsibilities for staff

5. Employment Status:
        Standing (full-time appointment with no end date)
        Fixed term (contract appointment with a specific end date)

6. Educational Status -- Which describes the highest educational degree you hold?:
            High School
            Bachelors
            Masters
            Terminal Degree

SECTION II

Instructions - This section presents 59 CAS statements. Please rate each statement on each of the two scales provided below each statement. The first scale asks you to indicate your opinion regarding statement applicability as a standard against which campus activities programs at Penn State can be improved. The second scale asks you to indicate the importance the standard statement provides relative to the work you do in Penn State activities programs.

MISSION

The Campus Activities Program (CAP) must incorporate student learning and student development in its mission. The CAP must develop record, disseminate, implement and regularly review its mission and goals. Mission statements must be consistent with the mission and goals of the institution and with the standards in this document. The CAP must operate as an integral part of the institution's overall mission.

7. 1   2   3   4   5   6   7
    Lowest   Highest
    Applicability for Improvement   Applicability for Improvement

8. 1   2   3   4   5   6   7
    Lowest   Highest
    Importance to Work   Importance to Work

The CAP must complement the institution's academic programs. The purposes must enhance the overall educational experiences of students through development of, exposure to, and participation in social, cultural, multicultural, intellectual, recreational, community service, and campus governance programs.

9. 1   2   3   4   5   6   7
    Lowest   Highest
    Applicability for Improvement   Applicability for Improvement

10. 1   2   3   4   5   6   7
    Lowest   Highest
    Importance to Work   Importance to Work

PROGRAM

The formal education of students consists of the curriculum and the co-curriculum, and must promote student learning and development that is purposeful and holistic. Relevant and desirable outcomes include intellectual growth, effective communication, realistic self-appraisal, enhanced self-esteem, clarified values, career choices, leadership development, healthy behaviors, meaningful interpersonal relationships, independence, collaboration, social responsibility, satisfying and productive lifestyles, appreciation of diversity, spiritual awareness, and achievement of personal and educational goals. CAP must identify relevant and desirable student learning and development outcomes and provide programs and services that encourage the achievement of those outcomes.

11. 1　　　　　2　　　　　3　　　　　4　　　　　5　　　　　6　　　　　7
     Lowest   Highest
     Applicability for Improvement   Applicability for Improvement

12. 1　　　　　2　　　　　3　　　　　4　　　　　5　　　　　6　　　　　7
     Lowest   Highest
     Importance to Work   Importance to Work

The CAP must be (a) intentional, (b) coherent, (c) based on theories and knowledge of learning and human development, (d) reflective of developmental and demographic profiles of the student population, and (e) responsive to needs of individuals, special populations, and communities.

13. 1　　　　　2　　　　　3　　　　　4　　　　　5　　　　　6　　　　　7
     Lowest   Highest
     Applicability for Improvement   Applicability for Improvement

14. 1　　　　　2　　　　　3　　　　　4　　　　　5　　　　　6　　　　　7
     Lowest   Highest
     Importance to Work   Importance to Work

Campus activities must include social, cultural, multicultural, intellectual, recreational, governance, and leadership, group development, campus and community service, and entertainment programs. Effective administrative support and individual and group advising must be provided.

15. 1　　　　　2　　　　　3　　　　　4　　　　　5　　　　　6　　　　　7
     Lowest   Highest
     Applicability for Improvement   Applicability for Improvement

16. 1　　　　　2　　　　　3　　　　　4　　　　　5　　　　　6　　　　　7
     Lowest   Highest
     Importance to Work   Importance to Work

LEADERSHIP

Effective and ethical leadership is essential to the success of all organizations. Institutions must appoint, position and empower campus activities program (CAP) leaders within the administrative structure to accomplish stated missions. Leaders at various levels must be selected on the basis of formal education and training, relevant work experience, personal skills and competencies, relevant professional credentials, as well as potential for promoting learning and development in students, applying effective practices to educational processes, and enhancing institutional effectiveness. Institutions must determine expectations of accountability for leaders and fairly assess their performance. Leaders must exercise authority over resources for which they are responsible to achieve their respective missions.

17.　1　　　　2　　　　3　　　　4　　　　5　　　　6　　　　7
　　　Lowest　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　Highest
　　　Applicability for Improvement　　　　　　　　　Applicability for Improvement

18.　1　　　　2　　　　3　　　　4　　　　5　　　　6　　　　7
　　　Lowest　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　Highest
　　　Importance to Work　　　　　　　　　　　　　　Importance to Work

Leaders must articulate a vision for their organization.

19.　1　　　　2　　　　3　　　　4　　　　5　　　　6　　　　7
　　　Lowest　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　Highest
　　　Applicability for Improvement　　　　　　　　　Applicability for Improvement

20.　1　　　　2　　　　3　　　　4　　　　5　　　　6　　　　7
　　　Lowest　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　Highest
　　　Importance to Work　　　　　　　　　　　　　　Importance to Work

Leaders must set goals and objectives based on the needs and capabilities of the population served.

21.　1　　　　2　　　　3　　　　4　　　　5　　　　6　　　　7
　　　Lowest　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　Highest
　　　Applicability for Improvement　　　　　　　　　Applicability for Improvement

22.　1　　　　2　　　　3　　　　4　　　　5　　　　6　　　　7
　　　Lowest　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　Highest
　　　Importance to Work　　　　　　　　　　　　　　Importance to Work

Leaders must promote student learning and development.

23.　1　　　　2　　　　3　　　　4　　　　5　　　　6　　　　7
　　　Lowest　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　Highest
　　　Applicability for Improvement　　　　　　　　　Applicability for Improvement

24.   1   2   3   4   5   6   7
     Lowest   Highest
     Importance to Work   Importance to Work

Leaders must prescribe and practice ethical behavior.

25.   1   2   3   4   5   6   7
     Lowest   Highest
     Applicability for Improvement   Applicability for Improvement

26.   1   2   3   4   5   6   7
     Lowest   Highest
     Importance to Work   Importance to Work

Leaders must recruit, select, supervise, and develop others in the organization.

27.   1   2   3   4   5   6   7
     Lowest   Highest
     Applicability for Improvement   Applicability for Improvement

28.   1   2   3   4   5   6   7
     Lowest   Highest
     Importance to Work   Importance to Work

Leaders must manage financial resources.

29.   1   2   3   4   5   6   7
     Lowest   Highest
     Applicability for Improvement   Applicability for Improvement

30.   1   2   3   4   5   6   7
     Lowest   Highest
     Importance to Work   Importance to Work

Leaders must coordinate human resources.

31.   1   2   3   4   5   6   7
     Lowest   Highest
     Applicability for Improvement   Applicability for Improvement

32.   1   2   3   4   5   6   7
     Lowest   Highest
     Importance to Work   Importance to Work

Leaders must plan, budget for, and evaluate personnel and programs.

33.   1   2   3   4   5   6   7
     Lowest   Highest
     Applicability for Improvement   Applicability for Improvement

34.   1   2   3   4   5   6   7
      Lowest   Highest
      Importance to Work   Importance to Work

Leaders must apply effective practices to educational and administrative processes.

35.   1   2   3   4   5   6   7
      Lowest   Highest
      Applicability for Improvement   Applicability for Improvement

36.   1   2   3   4   5   6   7
      Lowest   Highest
      Importance to Work   Importance to Work

Leaders must communicate effectively.

37.   1   2   3   4   5   6   7
      Lowest   Highest
      Applicability for Improvement   Applicability for Improvement

38.   1   2   3   4   5   6   7
      Lowest   Highest
      Importance to Work   Importance to Work

Leaders must initiate collaborative interaction between individuals and agencies that possess legitimate concerns and interests in the functional area.

39.   1   2   3   4   5   6   7
      Lowest   Highest
      Applicability for Improvement   Applicability for Improvement

40.   1   2   3   4   5   6   7
      Lowest   Highest
      Importance to Work   Importance to Work

Campus activities leaders must identify and find means to address individual, organizational, or environmental conditions that inhibit goal achievement. Leaders must promote campus environments that result in multiple opportunities for student learning and development. Leaders must continuously improve programs and services in response to changing needs of students and other constituents, and evolving institutional priorities.

41.   1   2   3   4   5   6   7
      Lowest   Highest
      Applicability for Improvement   Applicability for Improvement

42.   1   2   3   4   5   6   7
      Lowest   Highest
      Importance to Work   Importance to Work

ORGANIZATION AND MANAGEMENT

Guided by an overarching intent to ensure student learning and development, the campus activities program (CAP) must be structured purposefully and managed effectively to achieve stated goals. Evidence of appropriate structure must include current and accessible policies and procedures, written performance expectations for all employees, functional workflow graphics or organizational charts, and clearly stated service delivery expectations.

43. 1   2   3   4   5   6   7
     Lowest   Highest
     Applicability for Improvement   Applicability for Improvement

44. 1   2   3   4   5   6   7
     Lowest   Highest
     Importance to Work   Importance to Work

Evidence of effective management must include use of comprehensive and accurate information for decisions, clear sources and channels of authority, effective communication practices, decision-making and conflict resolution procedures, responsiveness to changing conditions, accountability and evaluation systems, and recognition and reward processes. CAP must provide channels within the organization for regular review of administrative policies and procedures.

45. 1   2   3   4   5   6   7
     Lowest   Highest
     Applicability for Improvement   Applicability for Improvement

46. 1   2   3   4   5   6   7
     Lowest   Highest
     Importance to Work   Importance to Work

HUMAN RESOURCES

The campus activities program (CAP) must be staffed adequately by individuals qualified to accomplish its mission and goals. Within established guidelines of the institution, CAP must establish procedures for staff selection, training, and evaluation; set expectations for supervision, and provide appropriate professional development opportunities. The program must strive to improve the professional competence and skills of all personnel it employs.

47. 1   2   3   4   5   6   7
     Lowest   Highest
     Applicability for Improvement   Applicability for Improvement

48. 1   2   3   4   5   6   7
     Lowest   Highest
     Importance to Work   Importance to Work

Professional staff members must hold an earned graduate degree in a field relevant to the position they hold or must possess an appropriate combination of educational credentials and related work experience.

49. 1   2   3   4   5   6   7
    Lowest   Highest
    Applicability for Improvement   Applicability for Improvement

50. 1   2   3   4   5   6   7
    Lowest   Highest
    Importance to Work   Importance to Work

Degree or credential-seeking interns must be qualified by enrollment in an appropriate field of study and by relevant experience. These individuals must be trained and supervised adequately by professional CAP staff members holding educational credentials and related work experience appropriate for supervision.

51. 1   2   3   4   5   6   7
    Lowest   Highest
    Applicability for Improvement   Applicability for Improvement

52. 1   2   3   4   5   6   7
    Lowest   Highest
    Importance to Work   Importance to Work

Student employees and volunteers must be carefully selected, trained, supervised, and evaluated. They must be trained on how and when to refer those in need of assistance to qualified staff members and have access to supervisor for assistance in making these judgments.

53. 1   2   3   4   5   6   7
    Lowest   Highest
    Applicability for Improvement   Applicability for Improvement

54. 1   2   3   4   5   6   7
    Lowest   Highest
    Importance to Work   Importance to Work

Student employees and volunteers must be provided clear and precise job descriptions, pre-service training based on assessed needs, and continuing staff development.

55. 1   2   3   4   5   6   7
    Lowest   Highest
    Applicability for Improvement   Applicability for Improvement

56. 1   2   3   4   5   6   7
    Lowest   Highest
    Importance to Work   Importance to Work

Each organizational unit must have technical and support staff members adequate to accomplish its mission. Staff members must be technologically proficient and qualified to perform their job functions, be knowledgeable of ethical and legal uses of technology, and have access to training. The level of staffing and workloads must be adequate and appropriate for program and service demands.

57. 1   2   3   4   5   6   7
    Lowest   Highest
    Applicability for Improvement   Applicability for Improvement

58. 1   2   3   4   5   6   7
     Lowest   Highest
     Importance to Work   Importance to Work

Salary levels and fringe benefits for all staff members must be commensurate with those for comparable positions within the institution, in similar institutions, and in the relevant geographic area.

59. 1   2   3   4   5   6   7
     Lowest   Highest
     Applicability for Improvement   Applicability for Improvement

60. 1   2   3   4   5   6   7
     Lowest   Highest
     Importance to Work   Importance to Work
Programs and services must institute hiring and promotion practices that are fair, inclusive, and non-discriminatory. Programs and services must employ a diverse staff to provide readily identifiable role models for students and to enrich the campus community.

61. 1   2   3   4   5   6   7
     Lowest   Highest
     Applicability for Improvement   Applicability for Improvement

62. 1   2   3   4   5   6   7
     Lowest   Highest
     Importance to Work   Importance to Work

Programs and services must create and maintain position descriptions for all staff members and provide regular performance planning and appraisals.

63. 1   2   3   4   5   6   7
     Lowest   Highest
     Applicability for Improvement   Applicability for Improvement

64. 1   2   3   4   5   6   7
     Lowest   Highest
     Importance to Work   Importance to Work

Programs and services must have a system for regular staff evaluation and must provide access to continuing education and professional development opportunities, including in-service training programs and participation in professional conferences and workshops.

65. 1   2   3   4   5   6   7
     Lowest   Highest
     Applicability for Improvement   Applicability for Improvement

66. 1   2   3   4   5   6   7
     Lowest   Highest
     Importance to Work   Importance to Work

FINANCIAL RESOURCES

The Campus Activities Program must have adequate funding to accomplish its mission and goals. Funding priorities must be determined within the context of the stated mission, goals, objectives, and comprehensive analysis of the needs and capabilities of students and the availability of internal or external resources.

67.　1　　　　2　　　　3　　　　4　　　　5　　　　6　　　　7
　　Lowest　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　Highest
　　Applicability for Improvement　　　　　　　　　Applicability for Improvement

68.　1　　　　2　　　　3　　　　4　　　　5　　　　6　　　　7
　　Lowest　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　Highest
　　Importance to Work　　　　　　　　　　　　　Importance to Work

The CAP must demonstrate fiscal responsibility and cost effectiveness consistent with the institutional protocols.

69.　1　　　　2　　　　3　　　　4　　　　5　　　　6　　　　7
　　Lowest　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　Highest
　　Applicability for Improvement　　　　　　　　　Applicability for Improvement

70.　1　　　　2　　　　3　　　　4　　　　5　　　　6　　　　7
　　Lowest　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　Highest
　　Importance to Work　　　　　　　　　　　　　Importance to Work

Programs and services must demonstrate fiscal responsibility and cost effectiveness consistent with institutional protocols. Methods for collecting and allocating fees must be clear and equitable. The authority and processes for decisions relevant to campus activities fees must be clearly established and funds be spent consistent with established priorities.

71.　1　　　　2　　　　3　　　　4　　　　5　　　　6　　　　7
　　Lowest　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　Highest
　　Applicability for Improvement　　　　　　　　　Applicability for Improvement

72.　1　　　　2　　　　3　　　　4　　　　5　　　　6　　　　7
　　Lowest　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　Highest
　　Importance to Work　　　　　　　　　　　　　Importance to Work

Students who have fiscal responsibility must be provided with information and training regarding institutional regulations and policies that govern accounting and handling of funds.

73.　1　　　　2　　　　3　　　　4　　　　5　　　　6　　　　7
　　Lowest　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　Highest
　　Applicability for Improvement　　　　　　　　　Applicability for Improvement

74.　1　　　　2　　　　3　　　　4　　　　5　　　　6　　　　7
　　Lowest　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　Highest
　　Importance to Work　　　　　　　　　　　　　Importance to Work

FACILITIES, TECHNOLOGY, EQUIPMENT

The campus activities program (CAP) must have adequate, suitable located facilities, adequate technology, and equipment to support its mission and goals efficiently and effectively. Facilities, technology, and equipment must be evaluated regularly and be in compliance with relevant federal, state, provincial, and local requirements to provide for access, health, safety, and security.

75   1   2   3   4   5   6   7
     Lowest   Highest
     Applicability for Improvement   Applicability for Improvement

76.   1   2   3   4   5   6   7
     Lowest   Highest
     Importance to Work   Importance to Work

LEGAL RESPONSIBILITIES

Staff members must be knowledgeable about and responsive to laws and regulations that relate to their respective responsibilities. CAP staff members must inform users of programs and services and officials, as appropriate, of legal obligations and limitations including constitutional, statutory, regulatory, and case law; mandatory laws and orders emanating from federal, state/provincial and local governments; and the institution's policies.

77.   1   2   3   4   5   6   7
     Lowest   Highest
     Applicability for Improvement   Applicability for Improvement

78.   1   2   3   4   5   6   7
     Lowest   Highest
     Importance to Work   Importance to Work

Staff members must use reasonable and informed practices to limit the liability exposure of the institution its officers, employees and agents. Staff members must be informed about institutional policies regarding personal liability and related insurance coverage options.

79.   1   2   3   4   5   6   7
     Lowest   Highest
     Applicability for Improvement   Applicability for Improvement

80.   1   2   3   4   5   6   7
     Lowest   Highest
     Importance to Work   Importance to Work

The institution must provide access to legal advice for staff members as needed to carry out assigned responsibilities.

81.   1   2   3   4   5   6   7
     Lowest   Highest
     Applicability for Improvement   Applicability for Improvement

82.   1   2   3   4   5   6   7
      Lowest   Highest
      Importance to Work   Importance to Work

The institution must inform CAP staff and students in a timely and systematic fashion about extraordinary or changing legal obligations and potential liabilities.

83.   1   2   3   4   5   6   7
      Lowest   Highest
      Applicability for Improvement   Applicability for Improvement

84.   1   2   3   4   5   6   7
      Lowest   Highest
      Importance to Work   Importance to Work

EQUITY AND ACCESS

Staff members must ensure that services and programs are provided on a fair and equitable basis. Facilities, programs, and services must be accessible. Hours of operation and delivery of and access to programs and services must be responsive to the needs of all students and other constituents. The CAP must adhere to the spirit and intent of equal opportunity laws.

85.   1   2   3   4   5   6   7
      Lowest   Highest
      Applicability for Improvement   Applicability for Improvement

86.   1   2   3   4   5   6   7
      Lowest   Highest
      Importance to Work   Importance to Work

Policies and practices of programs and services must not discriminate on the basis of age, color, disability sex, national origin, race religious creed, sexual identity, and/or veteran status.   Exceptions are appropriate only where provided by relevant law and institutional policy.

87.   1   2   3   4   5   6   7
      Lowest   Highest
      Applicability for Improvement   Applicability for Improvement

88.   1   2   3   4   5   6   7
      Lowest   Highest
      Importance to Work   Importance to Work

Consistent with their mission and goals, the CAP must take affirmative action to remedy significant imbalances in student participation and staffing patterns.

89   1   2   3   4   5   6   7
      Lowest   Highest
      Applicability for Improvement   Applicability for Improvement

90.   1   2   3   4   5   6   7
      Lowest   Highest
      Importance to Work   Importance to Work

As the demographic profiles of campuses change and new instructional delivery methods are introduced, institutions must recognize the needs of students who participate in distance learning for access to programs and services offered on campus. Institutions must provide appropriate services in ways that are accessible to distance learners and assist them in identifying and gaining access to other appropriate services in their geographic region.

91. 1   2   3   4   5   6   7
      Lowest   Highest
      Applicability for Improvement   Applicability for Improvement

92. 1   2   3   4   5   6   7
      Lowest   Highest
      Importance to Work   Importance to Work

CAMPUS AND EXTERNAL RELATIONS

The campus activities program (CAP) must establish, maintain, and promote effective relations with relevant individuals, campus offices, and external agencies.

93. 1   2   3   4   5   6   7
      Lowest   Highest
      Applicability for Improvement   Applicability for Improvement

94. 1   2   3   4   5   6   7
      Lowest   Highest
      Importance to Work   Importance to Work

DIVERSITY

Within the context of each institution's unique mission, diversity enriches the community and enhances the collegiate experience for all; therefore, the campus activities program (CAP) must nurture environments where commonalities and differences among people are recognized and honored.

95. 1   2   3   4   5   6   7
      Lowest   Highest
      Applicability for Improvement   Applicability for Improvement

96. 1   2   3   4   5   6   7
      Lowest   Highest
      Importance to Work   Importance to Work

The program must promote educational experiences that are characterized by open and continuous communication that deepens understanding of one's own identity, culture, and heritage, and that of others. The CAP must educate and promote respect about commonalities and differences in their historical and cultural contexts.

97. 1   2   3   4   5   6   7
      Lowest   Highest
      Applicability for Improvement   Applicability for Improvement

98.   1   2   3   4   5   6   7
       Lowest   Highest
       Importance to Work   Importance to Work

The program must address the characteristics and needs of a diverse population when establishing and implementing policies and procedures. The program must provide educational activities that sensitize all constituencies to an appreciation and understanding of cultural diversity among people. Activities programs must emphasize self assessment and personal responsibility for improving intercultural relations.

99.   1   2   3   4   5   6   7
       Lowest   Highest
       Applicability for Improvement   Applicability for Improvement

100.   1   2   3   4   5   6   7
       Lowest   Highest
       Importance to Work   Importance to Work

ETHICS

All persons involved in the delivery of the Campus Activities Program (CAP) must adhere to the highest principles of ethical behavior. The CAP must develop or adopt and implement appropriate statements of ethical practice. The program must publish these statements and ensure their periodic review by relevant constituencies.

101.   1   2   3   4   5   6   7
       Lowest   Highest
       Applicability for Improvement   Applicability for Improvement

102.   1   2   3   4   5   6   7
       Lowest   Highest
       Importance to Work   Importance to Work

Staff members must ensure that privacy and confidentiality are maintained with respect to all communications and records to the extent that such records are protected under the law and appropriate statements of ethical practice. Information contained in students' education records must not be disclosed without written consent except as allowed by relevant laws and institutional policies. CAP staff members must disclose to appropriate authorities information judged to be of an emergency nature, especially when the safety of the individual or others is involved, or when otherwise required by institutional policy or relevant law.

103.   1   2   3   4   5   6   7
       Lowest   Highest
       Applicability for Improvement   Applicability for Improvement

104.   1   2   3   4   5   6   7
       Lowest   Highest
       Importance to Work   Importance to Work

All staff members must be aware of and comply with the provisions contained in the institution's human subjects research policy and in other relevant institutional policies addressing ethical practices and confidentiality of research data concerning individuals.

105. 1   2   3   4   5   6   7
      Lowest   Highest
      Applicability for Improvement   Applicability for Improvement

106. 1   2   3   4   5   6   7
      Lowest   Highest
      Importance to Work   Importance to Work

Staff members must recognize and avoid personal conflict of interest or appearance thereof in their transactions with students and others.

107. 1   2   3   4   5   6   7
      Lowest   Highest
      Applicability for Improvement   Applicability for Improvement
108. 1   2   3   4   5   6   7
      Lowest   Highest
      Importance to Work   Importance to Work

Staff members must strive to ensure the fair, objective, and impartial treatment of all persons with whom they deal. Staff members must not participate in nor condone any form of harassment that demeans persons or creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive campus environment.

109. 1   2   3   4   5   6   7
      Lowest   Highest
      Applicability for Improvement   Applicability for Improvement

110. 1   2   3   4   5   6   7
      Lowest   Highest
      Importance to Work   Importance to Work

When handling institutional funds, all staff members must ensure that such funds are managed in accordance with established and responsible accounting procedures and the fiscal policies or processes of the institution.

111. 1   2   3   4   5   6   7
      Lowest   Highest
      Applicability for Improvement   Applicability for Improvement

112. 1   2   3   4   5   6   7
      Lowest   Highest
      Importance to Work   Importance to Work

Staff members must perform their duties within the limits of their training, expertise, and competence. When these limits are exceeded, individuals in need of further assistance must be referred to persons possessing appropriate qualifications.

113.　1　　　　2　　　　3　　　　4　　　　5　　　　6　　　　7
　　　Lowest　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　Highest
　　　Applicability for Improvement　　　　　　　Applicability for Improvement

114.　1　　　　2　　　　3　　　　4　　　　5　　　　6　　　　7
　　　Lowest　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　Highest
　　　Importance to Work　　　　　　　　　　　Importance to Work

Staff members must use suitable means to confront and otherwise hold accountable other staff members who exhibit unethical behavior.

115.　1　　　　2　　　　3　　　　4　　　　5　　　　6　　　　7
　　　Lowest　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　Highest
　　　Applicability for Improvement　　　　　　　Applicability for Improvement

116.　1　　　　2　　　　3　　　　4　　　　5　　　　6　　　　7
　　　Lowest　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　Highest
　　　Importance to Work　　　　　　　　　　　Importance to Work

Staff members must be knowledgeable about and practice ethical behavior in the use of technology.

117.　1　　　　2　　　　3　　　　4　　　　5　　　　6　　　　7
　　　Lowest　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　Highest
　　　Applicability for Improvement　　　　　　　Applicability for Improvement

118.　1　　　　2　　　　3　　　　4　　　　5　　　　6　　　　7
　　　Lowest　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　Highest
　　　Importance to Work　　　　　　　　　　　Importance to Work

ASSESSMENT AND EVALUATION

The campus activities program must conduct regular assessment and evaluations. Programs and services must employ effective qualitative and quantitative methodologies as appropriate, to determine whether and to what degree the stated mission, goals, and student learning and development outcomes are being met. The process must employ sufficient and sound assessment measures to ensure comprehensiveness. Data collected must include responses from students and other affected constituencies.

119.　1　　　　2　　　　3　　　　4　　　　5　　　　6　　　　7
　　　Lowest　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　Highest
　　　Applicability for Improvement　　　　　　　Applicability for Improvement

120.　1　　　　2　　　　3　　　　4　　　　5　　　　6　　　　7
　　　Lowest　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　Highest
　　　Importance to Work　　　　　　　　　　　Importance to Work

The program must evaluate periodically how well they complement and enhance the institution's stated mission and educational effectiveness.

121. 1   2   3   4   5   6   7
      Lowest   Highest
      Applicability for Improvement   Applicability for Improvement

122. 1   2   3   4   5   6   7
      Lowest   Highest
      Importance to Work   Importance to Work

Results of these evaluations must be used in revising and improving programs and services and in recognizing staff performance.

123. 1   2   3   4   5   6   7
      Lowest   Highest
      Applicability for Improvement   Applicability for Improvement

124. 1   2   3   4   5   6   7
      Lowest   Highest
      Importance to Work   Importance to Work

SECTION III

Instructions - Please provide general information regarding CAS and the improvement of Penn State campus activities programs.

125. Prior to receiving this survey, how would you characterize your awareness of the CAS functional unit standards for Campus Activities Programs?

Very Aware of The CAS standards	Somewhat Aware of the CAS Standards	Not Aware of the CAS Standards
1	2	3

126. Are there any additional benchmarks not listed in the survey that you feel can be used to improve campus activities programs performances?

_____
_____
_____
_____

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