



Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education

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This standard and all other standards are available along with information on self-assessment procedures in the most recent edition of the *CAS Professional Standards for Higher Education* book. You are particularly encouraged to examine the learning and developmental outcomes (see www.cas.edu and in the standards book) in the design and assessment of your programs.

This standard has a Self Assessment Guide (SAG) available for purchase from www.cas.edu for use in program evaluation.

CAS MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education (CAS) is to promote the improvement of programs and services to enhance the quality of student learning and development. CAS is a consortium of professional associations who work collaboratively to develop and promulgate standards and guidelines and to encourage self-assessment.

CAS STANDARDS AND GUIDELINES

Each CAS standard contains 14 common criteria categories (referred to as “general standards”) that have relevance for each and every functional area, no matter what its primary focus. In addition to the general standards, all functional area standards are comprised of both specialty standards and guidelines. All standards use the auxiliary verbs “**must**” and “**shall**” and appear in **bold print** so that users can quickly identify them. Guidelines are designed to provide suggestions and illustrations that can assist in establishing programs and services that more fully address the needs of students than those mandated by a standard. CAS guidelines appear in regular font and use the auxiliary verbs “should” and “may.”

OVER THIRTY YEARS OF PROFESSIONAL SERVICES

The Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education (CAS) has been the pre-eminent force for promoting standards in student affairs, student services, and student development programs since its inception in 1979. For the ultimate purpose of fostering and enhancing student learning, development, and achievement and in general to promote good citizenship, CAS continues to create and deliver a dynamic and credible Book of Professional Standards and Guidelines and Self-Assessment Guides that are designed to lead to a host of quality-controlled programs and services. These standards respond to real-time student needs, the requirements of sound pedagogy, and the effective management of 40 functional areas, consistent with institutional missions. Individuals and institutions from nearly 40 CAS member organizations comprise a professional constituency of over 100,000 professionals.

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The standards and guidelines published in “The Book of Professional Standards for Higher Education” by the Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education (CAS) and referred to in each of the “CAS Self-Assessment Guides” (SAGs) are developed through the voluntary efforts of leaders of professional associations in higher education. The purpose of the standards and guidelines is to identify criteria and principles by which institutions may choose to assess and enhance various areas of their academic, administrative, or student affairs programs and services. CAS specifically disclaims any liability or responsibility for any perceived or actual shortcomings inherent in the text or application of the standards. Further, CAS does not certify individuals nor accredit programs. No institution, whether it has met some or all of the CAS standards, is authorized to indicate that it is “approved, endorsed, certified, or otherwise sanctioned by CAS.” Institutions that have conducted a self-assessment of one or more functional areas addressed by CAS Standards and Guidelines using the appropriate CAS Self-Assessment Guide (SAG) may, where that self-assessment provides evidence that an institution meets these standards, are free to make accurate representations to the effect that the designated program or service meets the CAS Standards.

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202-862-1400, (email contact: Phyllis Mable, Executive Director, www.cas.edu)

THE ROLE of COLLEGE HONOR SOCIETIES

CAS Standards Contextual Statement

The purposes of honor societies in colleges and universities are threefold. First, they exist primarily to recognize the attainment of scholarship of a superior quality. Second, a few societies recognize the development of leadership qualities and of commitment to service and excellence in research, in addition to a strong scholarship record. Third, to the degree that this recognition is coveted, they encourage the production of superior scholarship and leadership. To accomplish these objectives, it is clear that an honor society must define and maintain a truly high standard of eligibility for membership and achieve sufficient status by so doing that membership becomes something to be highly valued.

The honor society has followed the expansion and specialization of higher education in America. When Phi Beta Kappa was organized in 1776, there was no thought given to its field because all colleges then in existence were for the training of men for the service of the church and the state. With the expansion of education into new fields a choice had to be made, and Phi Beta Kappa elected to operate in the field of liberal arts and sciences. Although this was not finally decided until 1898, the trend was evident earlier; the 1880s saw the establishment of Tau Beta Pi in the field of engineering and Sigma Xi in scientific research.

Early in the 20th century, other honor societies came into being. Phi Kappa Phi was organized to accept membership from all academic fields in the university. A few others of this nature had origins in Black, Catholic, or Jesuit colleges and universities. These honor societies became known as general honor societies. Other variations have developed since that time. Leadership honor societies recognized meritorious attainments in all-around leadership and campus citizenship. Numerous societies drew membership from the various departments of study, recognizing good work in the student's special field of study. These societies are generally known as specialized honor societies. Another variation recognized scholastic achievement during the freshman or sophomore year. Yet another variation recognized achievement in associate degree programs.

The national organization of each honor society sets standards for establishing collegiate chapters and requirements for administering them. Chapters are chartered to institutions and have a dual relationship: maintain national honor society standards and requirements and abide by institutional policies and procedures.

The Association of College Honor Societies (ACHS) was founded in 1925 to join forces for the establishment and maintenance of useful functions and desirable standards, including criteria for membership, for governance of each member society, and for chapter operation. In addition to defining honor societies, similar student organizations with more liberal membership requirements were named Recognition Societies. Baird's Manual*, for many years the definitive reference of college organizations, adopted the ACHS definitions for classification of Honor Societies and Recognition Societies.

The standards and functions originally named in the early history of ACHS still have relevance today as ACHS fulfills a certifying function in assuring candidates for membership as well as institutions that member societies have met the high standards. The standards also serve a role for judging credibility of non-member societies.

The challenge in the 21st century is the same as when ACHS was founded: to use academic and operational standards to allay the confusion prevailing on campuses and among the public regarding the credibility and legitimacy of newly emerging honor societies. A plethora of Internet societies, for-profit societies, and an increasingly narrow focus of specialized societies gives rise to the need for the CAS standards to guide colleges and universities in setting regulations for official recognition of campus honor societies. Students, parents, and the public can use the standards as criteria for judging quality.

References, Readings, and Resources

Association of College Honor Societies. (2002). *ACHS Handbook, 2002-2005*. 4990 Northwind Dr., Ste. 140, East Lansing, MI 48823-5031. Web site: www.achsnatl.org.

Warren, J. W. (2000). *Prelude to the new millennium: Promoting honor for seventy-five years*. East Lansing, MI: Association of College Honor Societies. www.achsnatl.org/history.asp.

Note: *Baird's Manual of American College Fraternities*, last published in 1991 by Baird's Manual Foundation, was the authoritative reference work on college Greek-letter societies since first published in 1879.

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COLLEGE HONOR SOCIETIES

CAS STANDARDS and GUIDELINES

Part 1. MISSION

The mission of College Honor Societies (CHS) is to confer distinction for high achievement in undergraduate, graduate, and professional studies; in student leadership; in service; and in research.

CHS must develop, disseminate, implement, and regularly review their mission. Mission statements must be consistent with the mission of the institution and with professional standards. Programs and services in higher education must enhance overall educational experiences by incorporating student learning and development outcomes in their mission.

The following historical functions are properly served by CHS:

- foster a spirit of liberal education
- stimulate and encourage intellectual development
- stand for freedom of mind and spirit and for democracy of learning
- provide spiritual and intellectual leadership
- preserve valuable traditions and customs
- provide opportunities for members to associate in mutual understanding for the purpose of advancing society in the art of democratic living
- stimulate worthy attitudes for the improvement of the general welfare of the institution
- impose upon members high citizenship responsibilities and emphasize deeper study and discussion of the political-moral tradition—its characteristics, ideals, and possibilities

Part 2. PROGRAM

The formal education of students, consisting of the curriculum and the co-curriculum, must promote student learning and development outcomes that are purposeful and holistic and that prepare students for satisfying and productive lifestyles, work, and civic participation. The student learning and development outcome domains and their related dimensions are:

- **knowledge acquisition, integration, construction, and application**
 - **Dimensions:** understanding knowledge from a range of disciplines; connecting knowledge to other knowledge, ideas, and experiences; constructing knowledge; and relating knowledge to daily life
- **cognitive complexity**
 - **Dimensions:** critical thinking; reflective thinking; effective reasoning; and creativity
- **intrapersonal development**
 - **Dimensions:** realistic self-appraisal, self-understanding, and self-respect; identity development; commitment to ethics and integrity; and spiritual awareness
- **interpersonal competence**
 - **Dimensions:** meaningful relationships; interdependence; collaboration; and effective leadership

- **humanitarianism and civic engagement**
 - **Dimensions: understanding and appreciation of cultural and human differences; social responsibility; global perspective; and sense of civic responsibility**
- **practical competence**
 - **Dimensions: pursuing goals; communicating effectively; technical competence; managing personal affairs; managing career development; demonstrating professionalism; maintaining health and wellness; and living a purposeful and satisfying life**

[See *The Council for the Advancement of Standards Learning and Developmental Outcomes* statement for examples of outcomes related to these domains and dimensions.]

Consistent with the institutional mission, College Honor Societies (CHS) must identify relevant and desirable student learning and development outcomes from among the six domains and related dimensions. When creating opportunities for student learning and development, CHS must explore possibilities for collaboration with faculty members and other colleagues.

CHS must assess relevant and desirable student learning and development outcomes and provide evidence of their impact on student learning and development. CHS must articulate how they contribute to or support students' learning and development in the domains not specifically assessed.

CHS must be:

- **integrated into the life of the institution**
- **intentional and coherent**
- **guided by theories and knowledge of learning and development**
- **reflective of developmental and demographic profiles of the student population**
- **responsive to needs of individuals, diverse and special populations, and relevant constituencies**

Programs of CHS must include the following elements:

- **educational programming that complements the academic curriculum**
- **opportunities for recognition by the institution**
- **faculty, staff, and administrator involvement and interaction with students**

The process for establishment of collegiate chapters of CHS must include:

- **formal chartering of each chapter by institution and college/department petition**
- **approval by official action of the governing body of the national organization**
- **jointly defined relationship between the institution and the college honor society that must be formalized, documented, and disseminated**
- **candidate selection by the campus chapter**
- **membership invitation by the campus chapter**

In order to maintain good standing with the national organization, CHS chapters must comply with the national organization's policies.

The national organization of a college honor society must be governed by its membership and must include:

- **officers/board members elected by the national membership**

- **chapter representation in the governing body**
- **national membership participation in approving and revising by-laws**
- **independent financial review and full financial disclosure**

Classifications of CHS include general scholarship, general leadership, specialized scholarship, and freshman and sophomore and two year honor societies. Minimum scholastic qualifications in each classification of CHS should include:

- general scholarship – top 20%, not earlier than 5th semester
- general leadership – top 35%, not earlier than 5th semester
- specialized scholarship – top 35%, not earlier than 4th semester
- freshman and sophomore and two-year (associate degree) honor societies – adherence to the same high standards with the exception of semesters completed

“Recognition Societies” are those organizations with lower scholastic criteria.

Part 3. LEADERSHIP

Advisers (faculty or staff member) must represent the institution in advising chapters of College Honor Societies (CHS). The adviser must model leadership principles, establish a climate and structure that facilitates leadership development, determine expectations of accountability, and fairly assess student performance.

Chapter governance documents and the names of officers and advisers must be filed annually both with the institution and the national organization.

Institutions should maintain a centralized registry of CHS organizations.

Because effective and ethical leadership is essential to the success of all organizations, advisers must ensure that CHS leaders with organizational authority for the programs and services:

- **articulate a vision and mission for their programs and services**
- **set goals and objectives based on the needs of the population served and desired student learning and development outcomes**
- **advocate for their programs and services**
- **promote campus environments that provide meaningful opportunities for student learning, development, and integration**
- **identify and find means to address individual, organizational, or environmental conditions that foster or inhibit mission achievement**
- **advocate for representation in strategic planning initiatives at appropriate divisional and institutional levels**
- **initiate collaborative interactions with stakeholders who have legitimate concerns and interests in the functional area**
- **apply effective practices to educational and administrative processes**
- **prescribe and model ethical behavior**
- **communicate effectively**
- **manage financial resources, including planning, allocation, monitoring, and analysis**
- **incorporate sustainability practices in the management and design of programs, services, and facilities**
- **manage human resource processes including recruitment, selection, development, supervision, performance planning, and evaluation**
- **empower professional, support, and student staff to accept leadership opportunities**

- encourage and support scholarly contribution to the profession
- be informed about and integrate appropriate technologies into programs and services
- be knowledgeable about federal, state/provincial, and local laws relevant to the programs and services and ensure that staff members understand their responsibilities by receiving appropriate training
- develop and continuously improve programs and services in response to the changing needs of students and other populations served and the evolving institutional priorities
- recognize environmental conditions that may negatively influence the safety of staff and students and propose interventions that mitigate such conditions

Leaders of CHS are elected by their peers to organize chapter activities.

Leaders of CHS should be students.

Part 4. HUMAN RESOURCES

College Honor Societies (CHS) must be staffed adequately by honor society advisers, qualified to accomplish the mission and goals. Within institutional guidelines, CHS must establish procedures for adviser selection, training, and evaluation; set expectations for supervision; and provide appropriate professional development opportunities to improve the leadership ability, competence, and skills of advisers.

Advisers of CHS must be employed by the institution as faculty or staff members and hold an earned graduate or professional degree in a field relevant to the position they hold or must possess an appropriate combination of educational credentials and related work experience.

With very few exceptions, faculty and staff are not employed as CHS advisers; most are volunteers.

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 staff members holding educational credentials and related work experience appropriate for supervision.

Graduate student advisers of CHS 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 staff members holding educational credentials and related work experience appropriate for supervision.

Leaders and advisers must be carefully trained, supervised, and evaluated. They must be educated on how and when to refer those in need of additional assistance to qualified staff members and must have access to a supervisor for assistance in making these judgments. Student leaders must be provided clear and precise job descriptions, pre-service training based on assessed needs, and continuing leadership development.

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

provided clear and precise job descriptions, pre-service training based on assessed needs, and continuing staff development.

Employees and volunteers must receive specific training on institutional policies and privacy laws regarding their access to student records and other sensitive institutional information (e.g., in the USA, Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, FERPA, or equivalent privacy laws in other states/provinces or countries.)

CHS must have technical and support staff members adequate to accomplish their mission. All members of the staff must be technologically proficient and qualified to perform their job functions, be knowledgeable about ethical and legal uses of technology, and have access to training and resources to support the performance of their assigned responsibilities.

All members of the staff must receive training on policies and procedures related to the use of technology to store or access student records and institutional data.

CHS must ensure that staff members are knowledgeable about and trained in emergency procedures, crisis response, and prevention efforts. Prevention efforts must address identification of threatening conduct or behavior of students, faculty members, staff, and others and must incorporate a system or procedures for responding, including but not limited to reporting them to the appropriate campus officials.

Salary levels and benefits for CHS advisers must be commensurate with those for comparable positions within the institution, in similar institutions, and in the relevant geographic area.

CHS must maintain position descriptions for advisers and leaders.

To create a diverse staff, CHS must institute hiring and promotion practices that are fair, inclusive, proactive, and non-discriminatory.

CHS must conduct regular performance planning and evaluation of staff members, advisers, and leaders. CHS must provide access to continuing and advanced education and professional development opportunities.

Part 5. ETHICS

Persons involved in the activities of College Honor Societies (CHS) must adhere to the highest principles of ethical behavior. CHS must review relevant professional ethical standards and develop or adopt and implement appropriate statements of ethical practice. CHS must publish these statements and ensure their periodic review by relevant constituencies.

CHS must orient new advisers and staff members to relevant ethical standards and statements of ethical practice.

Advisers of CHS 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 except as allowed by relevant laws and

institutional policies. Advisers of CHS 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.

Advisers of CHS must be aware of and comply with the provisions contained in the institution's policies pertaining to human subjects research and student rights and responsibilities, as well as those in other relevant institutional policies addressing ethical practices and confidentiality of research data concerning individuals.

Advisers of CHS must recognize and avoid personal conflicts of interest or appearance thereof in the performance of their work.

Advisers of CHS must strive to insure the fair, objective, and impartial treatment of all persons with whom they interact.

When handling institutional funds, advisers of CHS must ensure that such funds are managed in accordance with established and responsible accounting procedures and the fiscal policies or processes of the institution.

Promotional and descriptive information must be accurate and free of deception.

Advisers of CHS 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.

Advisers of CHS must use suitable means to confront and otherwise hold accountable other staff members who exhibit unethical behavior.

Advisers of CHS must be knowledgeable about and practice ethical behavior in the use of technology.

Part 6. LEGAL RESPONSIBILITIES

Advisers of College Honor Societies (CHS) must be knowledgeable about and responsive to laws and regulations that relate to their respective responsibilities and that may pose legal obligations, limitations, or ramifications for the institution as a whole. As appropriate, advisers must inform users of programs and services, as well as officials, 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.

CHS must have written policies on all relevant operations, transactions, or tasks that may have legal implications.

Advisers of CHS must neither participate in nor condone any form of harassment or activity that demeans persons or creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive campus environment.

Advisers of CHS must use reasonable and informed practices to limit the liability exposure of the institution and its officers, employees, and agents. Advisers of CHS

must be informed about institutional policies regarding risk management, personal liability, and related insurance coverage options and must be referred to external sources if coverage is not provided by the institution.

The institution must provide access to legal advice for advisers of CHS as needed to carry out assigned responsibilities.

The institution must inform advisers and members of CHS in a timely and systematic fashion about extraordinary or changing legal obligations and potential liabilities.

Part 7. EQUITY and ACCESS

Advisers of College Honor Societies (CHS) must ensure that programs and services are provided on a fair, equitable, and non-discriminatory basis in accordance with institutional policies and with all applicable state/provincial and federal statutes and regulations. CHS must maintain an educational and work environment free from discrimination in accordance with law and institutional policy. Advisers must ensure that invitations to membership in CHS are distributed on a fair and equitable basis.

Policies and practices of CHS must not discriminate on the basis of age; cultural heritage; disability; ethnicity; gender identity and expression; nationality; political affiliation; race; religious affiliation; sex; sexual orientation; economic, marital, social, or veteran status; and any other bases included in local, state/provincial, or federal laws.

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

CHS must ensure physical and program access for persons with disabilities. CHS must be responsive to the needs of all students and other populations served when establishing hours of operation and developing methods of delivering programs and services.

CHS must recognize the needs of distance learning students by providing appropriate and accessible services and assisting them in identifying and gaining access to other appropriate services in their geographic region.

CHS must include outreach to underrepresented populations in membership recruitment activities.

Part 8. DIVERSITY

Within the context of each institution's unique mission, diversity enriches the community and enhances the collegiate experience for all; therefore, College Honor Societies (CHS) must create and nurture environments that are welcoming to and bring together persons of diverse backgrounds.

CHS must promote environments that are characterized by open and continuous communication that deepens understanding of one's own identity, culture, and heritage, as well as that of others. Programs and services must recognize, honor, educate, and promote respect about commonalities and differences among people within their historical and cultural contexts.

CHS must address the characteristics and needs of a diverse population when establishing and implementing policies and procedures.

Part 9. ORGANIZATION and MANAGEMENT

To promote student learning and development outcomes, College Honor Societies (CHS) 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 program and service delivery expectations.

CHS must monitor websites used for distributing information to ensure that the sites are current, accurate, appropriately referenced, and accessible.

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

Part 10. CAMPUS and EXTERNAL RELATIONS

College Honor Societies (CHS) must reach out to relevant individuals, campus offices, and external agencies to:

- **establish, maintain, and promote effective relations**
- **disseminate information about their own and other related programs and services**
- **coordinate and collaborate, where appropriate, in offering programs and services to meet the needs of students and promote achievement of student learning and development outcomes**

CHS must have procedures and guidelines consistent with institutional policy for responding to threats, emergencies, and crisis situations. Systems and procedures must be in place to disseminate timely and accurate information to students and other members of the campus community during emergency situations.

CHS must have procedures and guidelines consistent with institutional policy for communicating with the media.

Part 11. FINANCIAL RESOURCES

College Honor Societies (CHS) must have adequate funding to accomplish their mission and goals. In establishing funding priorities and making significant changes, a comprehensive analysis, which includes relevant expenditures, external and internal resources, and impact on the campus community, must be conducted.

CHS must demonstrate fiscal responsibility and cost effectiveness consistent with institutional protocols.

Part 12. TECHNOLOGY

College Honor Societies (CHS) must have adequate technology to support their mission. The technology and its use must comply with institutional policies and procedures and be evaluated for compliance with relevant federal, state/provincial, and local requirements.

CHS must maintain policies and procedures that address the security and back up of data.

When technology is used to facilitate student learning and development, CHS must select technology that reflects current best pedagogical practices.

Technology, as well as any workstations or computer labs maintained by the CHS for student use, must be accessible and must meet established technology standards for delivery to persons with disabilities.

When CHS provide student access to technology, they must provide:

- **access to policies that are clear, easy to understand, and available to all students**
- **access to instruction or training on how to use the technology**
- **access to information on the legal and ethical implications of misuse as it pertains to intellectual property, harassment, privacy, and social networks**

Student violations of technology policies must follow established institutional student disciplinary procedures.

Students who experience negative emotional or psychological consequences from the use of technology must be referred to support services provided by the institution.

Part 13. FACILITIES and EQUIPMENT

College Honor Societies (CHS) must have adequate, accessible, suitably located facilities and equipment to support their mission and goals. If acquiring capital equipment as defined by the institution, CHS must take into account expenses related to regular maintenance and life cycle costs. Facilities and equipment must be evaluated regularly, including consideration of sustainability, and be in compliance with relevant federal, state/provincial, and local requirements to provide for access, health, safety, and security.

Meeting space for chapter activities and storage space for chapter materials (memorabilia, documents, files) should be available. Chapter files should be stored electronically and securely. Storage space for other chapter property should be available.

Advisers of CHS must have work space that is well-equipped, adequate in size, and designed to support their work and responsibilities. For conversations requiring privacy, staff members must have access to a private space.

Advisers of CHS who share work space must have the ability to secure their work adequately.

The design of the facilities must guarantee the security of records and ensure the confidentiality of sensitive information.

The location and layout of the facilities must be sensitive to the special needs of persons with disabilities as well as the needs of constituencies served.

CHS must ensure that staff members are knowledgeable of and trained in safety and emergency procedures for securing and vacating the facilities.

Part 14. ASSESSMENT and EVALUATION

College Honor Societies (CHS) must establish systematic plans and processes to meet internal and external accountability expectations with regard to program as well as student learning and development outcomes. CHS must conduct regular assessment and evaluations. Assessments must include 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 measures to ensure comprehensiveness. Data collected must include responses from students and other affected constituencies.

CHS must evaluate regularly how well they complement and enhance the institution's stated mission and educational effectiveness.

Results of these evaluations must be used in revising and improving programs and services, identifying needs and interests in shaping directions of program and service design, and recognizing adviser and leader performance.

*General Standards revised in 2008;
CHS content developed in 2005*