

# Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education

An Introduction to the CAS Approach  
to Quality Assurance in Educational  
Programs and Services

December, 2001

# Overview of CAS

- Founded in 1979 in response to efforts to establish specialized accreditation for student affairs preparation programs
- CAS is a consortium of 34 professional associations
- Twenty-nine standards and guidelines have been promulgated (and sometimes revised) by fall 2001

# CAS Mission

- Promulgate standards and guidelines for practice and preparation
- Promote assessment in educational practice
- Promote the use of standards in practice
- Promote quality assurance within higher education

# CAS Principles: Students and Their Institutions

- Student is considered as a unique, whole person
- Institutional environments shape learning
- Responsibility for learning rests with the student
- Institutions provide opportunities for learning
- Institutions reflect society and its diversity

# CAS Principles: Diversity and Multiculturalism

- Institutions embrace diversity and eliminate barriers that impede student learning
- Justice and respect for differences bond individuals to community

# CAS Principles: Organization, Leadership, and Human Resources

- Leadership is essential for institutional success
- Institutional success is related to clarity of mission
- Qualifications of staff members is tied directly to quality of educational programs and services
- Leaders possess sound educational preparation and experience

# CAS Principles: Health Engendering Environments

- Educational programs and services prosper in benevolent environments that provide students with appropriate levels of challenge and support.

# CAS Principles: Ethics

- Educational service providers provide impeccable ethical behavior in their professional and personal lives.

# CAS Purpose

- Beliefs about excellence require that all programs and services in institutions of higher education function at optimum levels
- Beliefs about collaboration require that all programs and services be accomplished in concert by students and educators
- Beliefs about ethics require that all programs and services be carried out in an environment of integrity and high ideals.

Continued

# CAS Purpose, Slide 2

- Beliefs about student development require that the student be considered as a whole person in the context of a diverse population and a diversity of institutions, that outcomes of education be comprehensive, and that the total environment be structured to create opportunities for student involvement and learning.

Continued

# CAS Purpose, Slide 3

- Beliefs about responsibility require that the institution recognize the rights and responsibilities of students as its citizens and that it provide an array of resources and learning opportunities that enable students to exercise their responsibility to take full advantage of them.

# The CAS Approach to Self-Regulation and Self-Assessment

The essential elements of self-regulation include:

- Institutional culture that values involvement of all its members in decision making
- Quality indicators that are determined by the institution
- Use of standards and guidelines in quality assurance

Continued

# The CAS Approach to Self-Regulation and Self-Assessment, Slide 2

- Collection and analysis of data on institutional performance
- Commitment to continuing improvement that presupposes freedom to explore and develop alternative directions for the future

# Putting the CAS Standards to Work

- Establish and prepare the self-study team
- Conduct the self-study
- Identify and summarize evidence
- Identify discrepancies
- Determine appropriate corrective action
- Recommend action for program enhancement
- Prepare an action plan

# Other Uses of CAS Standards

- Program establishment
- Staff development
- Academic preparation
- Credibility