DIVISION OF STUDENT AFFAIRS TERMS AND CONCEPTS

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Activity: A broad range of functions performed within a program that are intended to affect a desired change in an individual or group. An activity covers a wide range of possibilities (e.g., workshops, presentations, role plays).

Aim: Used interchangeably with the term goal. Aims are broad statements used to prescribe what the program/service expects to accomplish to meet the needs of students.

Assessment: The process of collecting information about student learning and performance for program improvement. Two questions at the heart of assessment are: 1. Where do we want students to be at the end of a workshop, intervention or program? and 2. How will we know if they get there? Assessment data will be guided by the student affairs professional so that it:

- Reflects the needs, aims, and objectives of a particular functional area
- Helps to refine the planning, implementation, and assessment process
- Helps the Division and areas refine their programs, strategies and events to meet evolving student needs

CAS (Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education): The Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education (CAS) develops and disseminates standards that enhance the quality of a student’s total learning experience
in higher education. CAS collectively develops, examines, and endorses standards and guidelines for program and service areas in higher education.

**Comprehensive Program Review (CPR):** A three-year review process that focuses on program quality and improvement. The CPR process involves members of the Division of Student Affairs, campus faculty, staff, administrators, outside professional reviewers, and community representatives to ensure a holistic review. The overall process includes:

1. **Self-Study Phase,** a program review phase that involves members of the program under review;
2. **Site Review Phase,** a program review phase that includes faculty, staff and administrators; and
3. **Outside Professional Reviewer Phase,** a program review phase that involves an outside professional consultant who is an expert in the respective program area.

**Competencies:** Knowledge, skills, attitudes, values, motivations, and beliefs people must have in order to be successful in a job, field or profession.

**Intervention:** Direct actions taken to intervene in the life of an individual for the purpose of altering or rectifying a problem situation. For example, in student affairs this might be done through a counseling session conducted by Student Health and Psychological Services or an educational sanction imposed by Residential Education staff in response to a violation of community living standards.

**Learning:** A comprehensive, holistic, transformative activity that combines academic learning and student development, processes that have often been considered separate and even independent of each other (*Learning Reconsidered: A Campus-Wide Focus on the Student Experience*, NASPA 2004).

**Mapping:** The process of connecting an aim, outcome, or objective with another aim, outcome or objective within one organization in an institution’s hierarchy or across organizations.
**Need:** A discrepancy or gap between “what is” and “what should be.”

**Needs Assessment:** Assists in determining whether proposed interventions, activities, or events are necessary. The purpose of a needs assessment is to:
- Understand the extent of the problem
- Gather the information about all the services that are available to the target population
- Identify the gaps in the services available to the target population

**Program:** A set of planned systematic activities using managed resources to achieve specific aims related to specific needs of specific identified individuals or groups in a specific context. In student affairs, this might be Intercultural or Student Leadership Programs.

**Program Evaluation:** An on-going process designed to monitor and improve a program’s effectiveness.

**Program Outcomes:** The accumulation of all outcomes accomplished as a result of a program, strategy and/or event; the actual results of an assessment.

**Service:** Intentional activities, events, or behaviors that produce a product that supports student access, retention, graduation or post-graduate success. In student affairs, this might include Personal Counseling Services, Disability Resource Programs, and Student Health Services.

**Strategy:** Planned arrangements of activities, events, and/or interventions designed to support program objectives. In student affairs, this might include student assistant training, student organization retreats or staff professional development series.

**Student Learning Objectives:** Describe what a student is expected to know (cognitive), be (affective) or do (behavior) at the end of the program, activity, event or intervention.
**Student Learning Outcomes:** Describe what a student actually knows, understands or is able to do at the end of the program, activity, event or intervention.

**Student Needs Assessment:** A process by which information about student needs is collected, synthesized, and interpreted to assist the professional in matching student needs with strategies for addressing them.