

American College Personnel Association

TASK FORCE ON CERTIFICATION

Preliminary Report

February, 2006

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American College Personnel Association

TASK FORCE ON CERTIFICATION — OVERVIEW

“For more than 15 years, student affairs professionals have been discussing some form of certification program for people working in the field of student affairs. During this time, there have been several proposals discussed” (Blimling, 2004). In the Fall of 2004, ACPA President-Elect, Gregory S. Blimling, appointed a Task Force on Certification. The charge assigned to the task force was to consider the feasibility of establishing an optional national program for student affairs professionals who desire certification in the field and to generate a report recommending a course of action for the association. Members of the task force represent a wide range of constituent groups within ACPA and include both faculty and practitioners. Several task force members belong to ACPA and NASPA and have served in leadership roles in both of these comprehensive student affairs associations. Members of the task force are committed to providing thoughtful study of this issue. The work of the task force is expected to span Gregory S. Blimling's presidency and continue into the presidency of President-Elect, Jeanne Steffes, with a report tentatively being planned for the Summer Leadership Meetings in July, 2006.

In Washington, D.C., the Task Force on Certification first convened in January of 2005 to discuss how ACPA might create processes for the assessment of professional competencies and continuing professional education within the student affairs field. Additionally, the task force began discussing what recognition and reporting systems might be needed to support such an effort. To gauge the level of interest in ACPA for this kind of initiative, the task force decided to poll the membership of the association. With assistance from ACPA International Office staff, a survey was developed and offered electronically to all ACPA members. Additionally, members of the task force offered a session at the 2005 Convention in Nashville and met with many of the association's constituent groups while at the convention. In October, 2005, the task force reconvened at the ACPA International Office headquarters to review the survey results, consider feedback received from the membership of ACPA, and plan a course of action for completing its charge. More is written about the planned course of action by the task force in the “Recommended Course of Action” section of this preliminary report.

ACPA Task Force on Certification

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Defining the necessary knowledge and skills of its members is a mark of a maturing profession. A number of student affairs scholars and organizations have articulated knowledge and skills necessary to work in the student affairs profession. These include Barr (1993), Komives & Woodard (2003), Pope and Reynolds (1997), Pope, Reynolds, and Mueller (2004), Winston, Creamer, and Miller (2001), and the Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education (2003). Though the knowledge and skills in the literature noted above are somewhat similar, there are differences. Pope, Reynolds, and Mueller noted, "There appears to be a lack of consensus in the field regarding the core competencies for effective student affairs practice...there is a strong compelling need for the student affairs profession to become more competency based than it is" (p. 8). There has been no process for creating a consensus of the skills and knowledge necessary for students affairs work. Consequently, there is no profession-wide understanding or distribution of these competencies.

This lack of consensus is problematic for two important reasons.

1. The lack of a consistent articulation of knowledge and skills necessary to enter the student affairs profession allows many people to enter the profession from a variety of disciplines and experiences, some of whom are uninformed of the historical values and theoretical grounding of student affairs work and untrained in the skills necessary to fulfill student affairs roles.

Certainly, the preferred means of entering the student affairs profession is via a master's degree in college student affairs administration. More of a consensus upon, and profession-wide distribution of, knowledge and skills necessary to serve in student affairs may encourage hiring agents to hire formally educated and trained student affairs staff and also would certainly provide intentional direction for professional development of those who enter the field without formal training.

2. Even for those with formal education and degrees in student affairs graduate programs, there is no intentional structure of lifelong learning to maintain professional competence.

Regardless of how one enters the profession, values of the student affairs profession stress the importance of lifelong learning and continual professional development. Professional development is ultimately the responsibility of the individual in conjunction with supervisors and professional associations. However, a more structured professional development plan upon which professional associations, supervisors, and individuals could base and track their professional development related to knowledge and skills would make intentional professional development far easier. Divisions of Student Affairs could greatly benefit from this when planning professional development activities for their entire student affairs staffs. Having a variety of professional development opportunities including national conventions, state or regional conferences, local drive-in workshops, web-based courses, and literature, all linked to a professional development plan and systematically tracked, in addition to formal training through graduate programs, would go a long way toward ensuring a more prepared profession and better practice.

Certification Survey Findings

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Task Force on Certification convened in January of 2005 for the purpose of discussing how the Association might establish a process for the assessment of professional competencies and needs, continuing professional education, and recognition and reporting systems for such an effort. The members of the Task Force decided to poll the membership on its interest in such a process. A complete analysis of the survey is included in this report under Appendix A.

All ACPA members were eligible to participate in this study. At the time the survey was posted, the membership database consisted of 6,815 viable email addresses. A total of 2,346 (34.4%) responses were received. The typical ACPA respondent was more likely to be a student affairs practitioner who was a White female, holding a Masters degree, with nine years of experience in a mid-level position within her department at a 4-year institution with a student enrollment of more than 10,000 students.

- Ninety-two percent of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that it would be helpful if ACPA would define a professional development curriculum based on professional core competencies.
- Ninety-three percent of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that it would be helpful if ACPA offered some conference programs and regional workshops based on this curriculum on a consistent basis.
- Eighty-three percent of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they would support an effort to certify attendance at professional development programs that met a set of agreed upon standards by assigning continuing professional education credits to them.
- Eighty-six percent of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they would participate in a program where continuing professional education credits could be voluntarily earned and recorded as a record of professional achievement.
- Eighty-four percent of respondents favored creating a program where they could create their own career development transcript.
- Eighty-six percent of respondents indicated support for the creation of a program where members, on a voluntary basis, could seek professional certification by their association based on their academic preparation, experience in the field, and continuing professional education.

Levels of support for these program elements were also examined by various subgroups of respondents. No statistical differences were found when comparisons were made based on institutional size, 2-year versus 4-year type, and those already having a professional certification (i.e., licensed psychologist) versus those without such certification. Females, people of color, entry- and mid-level professionals, and professionals holding bachelors and masters degrees were statistically more likely to support the program elements identified in this study than their counterparts.

Recommended Course Of Action

As a second phase of this assessment, Steve Janosik and Joan Hirt analyzed the comments made by respondents to each item on the questionnaire.

- Respondents to the six items on the survey offered a total of 1,663 comments.
- Of those who responded, more than half (N=879, 53%) either endorsed or opposed the idea of intentional professional development while the remaining 47% did not reveal a position.
- Of the 879 comments that expressed a specific position, 84% endorsed the notion of a professional development curriculum.
- Regardless of position (endorsement or opposition) respondents expressed concerns over logistical issues such as the costs associated with engaging in a professional development program, what the content of the program might be, and when/where development programs would be offered.

These findings go well beyond the anecdotal data collected heretofore and were useful to the Task Force in considering the need for a program that emphasizes knowledge, skills and abilities which constitute preparation for and continual professional development of an exemplary student affairs professional. A more complete comment analysis report is provided under Appendix B.

Based on feedback from constituent groups of ACPA at the 2005 Convention and survey results, the Task Force is recommending the following course of action be adopted. The recommendations are outlined in phases and tasks within each phase.

PHASE ONE:

Task I: Content Analysis of Existing Literature and Research

We need to undertake seriously, as an association and a profession, a study and explication of the knowledge, skills and abilities that constitute preparation for and continual professional development of an exemplary student affairs professional. What does it take to do our jobs properly at various career stages and in different roles on different campuses? Of necessity, the final product of such a study will result in quite general areas of study, with a great deal of detail about what constitutes best practice in each one. Ideally, each area would be dynamic and evolve over time, like law or student learning theory, for example. There will no doubt be controversy aroused by such a process. However, the controversy will encourage a needed dialogue in our profession about necessary competencies.

Though explicating professional preparation and professional development is complex, there is a large and active literature base in identification of competencies from many perspectives. Plus, the Council for the Advancement of Standards (CAS) has worked diligently for years to identify standards and guidelines for more than 30 functional areas, as well as overall professional preparation. There have been many conversations and reports about best practices. A small group of doctoral students, led by Sarah Schoper at the University of Maryland-College Park (also a member of the Task Force on Certification), has begun to review and conduct a content analysis of the existing literature as a prelude to Task II.

Task II: Professional Development Core Competencies/Curriculum Development —Steering Committee on Professional Competencies and Curriculum

From the content analysis, we recommend the appointment of a group, a Steering Committee on Professional Competencies and Curriculum, to build on the product of the doctoral student group and synthesize it into a model curriculum or set of core competencies that will eventually serve as the basis for all professional development activities of the association, including the annual conference, regional and national workshops, on-line courses and resources, and other modalities. Refer to Appendix C for a more complete charge for this Steering Committee. First, however, the Steering Committee, a group of knowledgeable faculty scholars and practitioners in the field, should submit its preliminary work for review by the profession.

Task III: Feedback on Core Competencies/Curriculum-Task Force and Membership at the Annual Conference

We have arranged for discussion groups at the annual 2006 conference to give feedback on the work of the Task Force thus far and specifically on the model of competencies/curriculum that the Steering Committee on Professional Competencies and Curriculum will develop. This is a critical step to maintain good faith with ACPA membership. We previously surveyed our members and went forward based on their positive stance. Now we want to have them examine our early work. We should repeat this cycle multiple times, as appropriate, throughout our work. This process may involve reaching out to groups like CAS and NASPA as well to receive their feedback.

Task IV: Finalizing the Professional Development Core Competencies/Curriculum — Steering Committee and Task Force

The next step is obviously to incorporate the input from the conference and “finish” designing the core preparation curriculum and continual professional development plan. The goal would be to create a curriculum and plan to be useful for planning, as well as being general enough to allow for diversity and creativity in professional development programming.

Task V: Recommendations

The Task Force on Certification will present its report and the proposed Professional Competencies Model and Curriculum to the ACPA Executive Council at the 2006 Summer Leadership Meeting. The Task Force report will likely include recommendations for consideration of future phases.

Task VI: Ongoing Series of Professional Development Opportunities (including regional and national programs and workshops, on-line opportunities, and conference programs, responding to the various areas of the competencies/curriculum).

Some of professional development activities should be “commissioned,” some should be “sponsored,” and some should respond to guidelines, such as annual conference programs. The idea is to achieve a balance over time in the various curricular or competency areas and at varying levels within each area. The Association needs to find a way to monitor and manage this process, consistent with the underlying notion of peer review.

Time line for Phase One:

The idea is for the first 5 tasks to be completed before the Summer, 2006 ACPA Leadership Meeting. Task VI will take at least two years for an initial trial.

PHASE TWO:

Task I: Study of Documenting Systems Options

(including try-outs of more than one option)

Almost immediately, if the experience of other associations is any guide, the implementation of an organized professional development curriculum will result in calls for record-keeping or documentation of some sort by the sponsoring party. It makes sense that some sort of web-based application should be used, but the extent of documentation and the nature of the service will need careful examination. For example, should we simply keep track of “approved” continuing education units or should we offer a “transcript/portfolio” type of service? Should the service be highly interactive with suggestions for follow up activities or experience-appropriate activities? Should the service be primarily or exclusively for ACPA members? These and probably a dozen other options should be thoughtfully discussed with the membership and carefully considered, as fully as possible.

Task II: Feedback on Options (including costs, efficacy, and ease of use)

We will need to keep careful track of these and other variables. Clearly, the method to be chosen should offer the maximum utility for minimum cost and labor.

Task III: Recommendations

Assistance from ACPA International Office staff will be necessary in order to identify the options that will allow appropriate interfaces and are able to be supported by ACPA's information technology infrastructure. Clearly, hardware and software issues will need to be carefully analyzed by Gregory Roberts, Peter Brown and other International Office Staff and a budget line will need to be established in the annual budget to support this initiative. Considerable investigation is necessary before the expense can be reasonably estimated.

Time line for Phase Two:

Depending upon how many quality professional development activities have been made available and how easily we can find and implement software and hardware solutions, we could be up and running with documentation during or after the first year of programming. A total trial period of two to three years should suffice to proceed to Phase Three.

PHASE THREE:

Task I: Assessment of the Application of the First Two Phases

(including cost benefit analysis)

Likely benefits include increased membership, increased event attendance, increased web site activity, opportunities for sponsorship of sites and activities, and enhanced prestige of the Association. Disadvantages of curriculum and plan as outlined here include the expense and perceived exclusiveness. An appointed group, or perhaps a group representing the Commission on Assessment, could be commissioned by ACPA to assess the success of the application of the first two phases.

Task II: Recommendations

The committee that is assigned responsibility for assessing the success of Phases I and II could generate a report to the Executive Council of ACPA with recommendations for improvement or discontinuation of the effort.

PHASE FOUR:

Task I: Study of Recognition and Awards Options

Later, it seems likely that as professional development activities are documented for participating student affairs professionals, discussions about recognition for those who have exemplary professional development records will occur. When appropriate, ACPA could again charge a group to research and recommend possible options for recognizing role models, those who have demonstrated, through their professional development activities, lifelong learning to maintain professional competence.

Task II: Feedback on Options

After some options for recognition and/or awards are identified, they would need to be presented and discussed by ACPA's constituent groups. This could be achieved through a variety of approaches. The group charged with studying and presenting options could advance an examination strategy, receive and analyze the feedback and develop recommendations to present to ACPA's Executive Council for consideration. Particular attention should be paid to reaching the entire membership during the feedback period.

Task III: Recommendations

The committee's recommendations might include recognition and award criteria, recognition levels, methods for consideration or review, frequency of recognition, communication strategies, and the like. However, the initial question is whether such recognition is necessary or desirous by the membership of ACPA.

PHASE FIVE: FUTURE CONSIDERATIONS

Task I: Study of Credential Evaluation/Certification Options

While the Task Force on Certification was charged with exploring feasibility of establishing an optional national program for student affairs professionals who desire certification in the field, very quickly it became apparent to Task Force members that the notion of certification of student affairs professionals, with continuing professional education required to maintain certification, was premature until an established set of core professional development competencies was identified and in place. Conversations are likely to continue and future consideration of a certification process for student affairs professionals seems likely. There are numerous certification models available for consideration. Most would involve some sort of initial credential evaluation. However, it seems preliminary to the Task Force at this juncture to give serious consideration to this subject without first successfully implementing a curriculum focused on a core set of professional development competencies.

Task II: Feedback on Options

If future consideration of a credentialing or certification process leads to the identification of some options for consideration, they would obviously need to be presented and discussed within ACPA, NASPA and other stakeholder groups. This could be achieved through a variety of approaches.

Task III: Recommendations

Should the student affairs profession ever offer certification, it is assumed that ACPA would play a major role in the administration of such an effort. Ideally, it would seem, the process would be self-sustaining, with any excess revenue benefiting the profession through programming and services. Accordingly, care and consideration should be given so that the operation of ACPA not be adversely affected even during a start-up period. This would, no doubt, require careful planning and some capacity building in the form of server space, band width, extra memory, software, programming, and training. It would likely result in additional personnel expense as well. Additionally, consultation on technical, financial, and legal matters would be likely expenses.

Based on its careful consideration of the information available, the Task Force on Certification believes consideration of certification as a formal process is premature at this time. That said, this Task Force recognizes that ACPA is committed to advancing the profession, serving its members and colleagues, and doing so in a way that is efficient, effective, and reflects our collective best thinking about the future of higher education. Therefore, ACPA will continue ongoing research and develop further recommendations in the broad area of professional development, standards and certification.

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A Report to ACPA's Task Force on Certification

By

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Executive Summary

The Task Force on Certification convened in January of 2005 for the purpose of discussing how the Association might develop a process for the assessment of professional competencies and needs, continuing professional education, and recognition and reporting systems for such an effort. The members of the Task Force decided to poll the membership on its interest in such a process.

All ACPA members were eligible to participate in this study. At the time the survey was posted, the membership database consisted of 6,815 viable email addresses. A total of 2,346 (34.4%) responses were received. The typical ACPA respondent was more likely to be a student affairs practitioner who was a White female, holding a Masters degree, with nine years of experience in a mid-level position within her department at a 4-year institution with a student enrollment of more than 10,000 students.

Ninety-two percent of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that it would be helpful if ACPA would define a professional development curriculum based on professional core competencies.

Ninety-three percent of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that it would be helpful if ACPA offered some conference programs and regional workshops based on this curriculum on a consistent basis.

Eighty-three percent of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they would support an effort to certify attendance at professional development programs that met a set of agreed upon standards by assigning continuing professional education credits to them.

Eighty-six percent of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they would participate in a program where continuing professional education credits could be voluntarily earned and recorded as a record of professional achievement.

Eighty-four percent of respondents favored creating a program where they could create their own career development transcript

Eighty-six percent of respondents indicated support for the creation of a program where members, on a voluntary basis, could seek professional certification by their association based on their academic preparation, experience in the field, and continuing professional education.

Levels of support for these program elements were also examined by various subgroups of respondents. No statistical differences were found when institutional size, 2-year versus 4-year type, and those having a professional certification versus those without such a certification were compared. Females, minorities, entry- and mid-level professionals, and professionals holding bachelors and masters degrees were statistically more likely to support the program elements identified in this study than their counterparts.

A Report to ACPA's Task Force on Certification

Dr. Gregory S. Blimling, as President-Elect of the American College Personnel Association (ACPA), convened the Task Force on Certification in January of 2005 for the purpose of discussing how the Association might develop a process for the assessment of professional competencies and needs, continuing professional education, and recognition and reporting systems for such an effort. During this meeting, the members of the Task Force decided to poll the membership on its interest in programs that would provide more intentional professional development activities.

METHODS

Instrument

A short questionnaire was developed and revised through several rounds of email exchanges with Task Force members. The final instrument consisted of six questions designed to evaluate support for various program elements. Participants were given four response options to each of these questions (Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree, and Strongly Disagree). In addition, participants were encouraged to comment on each item. Ten other items solicited demographic information about the respondent. Once the Task Force members approved the items, the questionnaire was converted to an electronic form and permission was obtained to host the survey on the computer servers at Virginia Tech.

Participants

All ACPA members were eligible to participate in this study. At the time the survey was posted, the membership database consisted of 6,815 viable email addresses.

ACPA members were contacted by email, invited to participate in the study, and directed to the URL where the electronic survey could be found. Participants were assured that their responses would remain anonymous and used as grouped data. Two reminder emails were sent in an effort to increase the response rate.

Data Analysis

Simple frequency counts were calculated on the demographic data and the six questions. Since the quantitative data were categorical, chi-square tests were conducted to examine differences between groups. The qualitative data collected as comments to each of the six items will be analyzed in a separate report.

RESULTS

A total of 1,557 (22.8%) ACPA members responded to the first request for information. After the first reminder, another 512 (7.5%) responses were received. An additional 277 (4.1%) individuals responded to the second and final reminder. The following frequencies were tabulated from 2,346 (34.4%) responses.

Cronbach's alpha was calculated to check for the consistency of responses among the ACPA members who completed the questionnaire. The reliability coefficient for the sample was .89, which confirmed the questionnaire's reliability and was sufficiently strong to allow group comparisons.

Demographic Characteristics

The typical ACPA respondent was more likely to be a student affairs practitioner who was a White female, holding a Masters degree, with nine years of experience in a mid-level position within her department at a 4-year institution with a student enrollment of more than 10,000 students. The specific composition of the respondent group can be found in Table 1. No attempt to cross validate the respondents with the demographic characteristics of the Association was made.

Responses to Program Elements

Simple frequencies were calculated on each of the six questions posed in the survey. Large numbers of respondents supported the creation of a more intentional program for professional development. Because Association and Task Force members have raised concerns about the effects of such a program on student affairs professionals at smaller institutions, those without advanced degrees, and minorities, among others, additional analyses were conducted to assess the level of support by those subgroups.

Developing a defined professional development curriculum.

Ninety-three percent of respondents support an effort by ACPA to develop a professional development curriculum based on core professional competencies to help individuals make more purposeful decisions about their professional development. Women (94%, n=1399) were significantly more supportive than male (90%, n=748) respondents (N=2213, $\chi^2=8.95$, df=1, p=.003). Minorities (95%, n=450) were significantly more supportive than White (92%, n=1698) respondents (N=2310, $\chi^2=4.22$, df=1, p=.04). Professionals in entry- (95%, n=766) and mid-level (95%, n=654) positions were significantly more supportive than those in upper level (88%, n=508) positions in their organizations (N=2097, $\chi^2=31.78$, df=2, p=.001). Professionals holding bachelors (98%, n=260) and masters (94%, n=1496) degrees were significantly more supportive than those holding terminal (86%, n=397) degrees (N=2321, $\chi^2=42.20$, df=2, p=.001). No statistical differences were found when institutional size, 2-year versus 4-year type, and those having a professional certification versus those without such a certification were compared.

Offering programs based on a curriculum.

Ninety-three percent of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that it would be helpful if ACPA offered some conference programs and regional workshops based on this curriculum on a consistent basis. Women (95%, n=1408) were significantly more supportive than male (93%, n=759) respondents (N=2306, $\chi^2=4.74$, df=1, p=.034). Professionals in entry- (96%, n=768) and mid-level (95%, n=657) positions were significantly more supportive than those in upper level (90%, n=521) positions in their organizations (N=2071, $\chi^2=19.05$, df=2, p=.001). Professionals holding bachelors (99%, n=266) and masters

Table 1: Demographic Characteristics of Respondents (n=2,346) *

Gender	%	n
Female	64.4	1495
Male	35.6	828
Race		
African-American	9.0	209
Asian-American	2.6	61
Hispanic or Latino	3.8	87
White; non-Hispanic	79.5	1844
Multiracial	2.5	59
Other	2.5	59
Highest Degree Earned		
Bachelors	11.5	267
Masters	68.6	1598
Doctorate	20.0	466
Employment Status		
Practitioner	92.8	2026
Faculty Member	7.2	158

Organizational Level

Entry	38.7	808
Mid	33.4	697
Upper	27.9	582

Institutional Type

2-year	4.8	99
4-year	95.2	1948

Institutional Size

Small (1 - 4,500)	21.1	519
Medium (4,001- 10,000)	18.2	448
Large (> 10,000)	60.7	1496

*Numbers may not total to 2,346 due to missing data.

(94%, n=1499) degrees were significantly more supportive than those holding terminal (90%, n=412) degrees (N=2313, $\chi^2=23.68$, df=2, p=.001). No statistical differences were found when institutional size, 2-year versus 4-year type, those having a professional certification versus those without such a certification, and race were compared.

Certifying attendance and assigning continuing professional education credits.

Eighty-three percent of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they would support an effort to certify attendance at professional development programs that met a set of agreed upon standards by assigning continuing professional education credits to them. Women (86%, n=1206) were significantly more supportive than male (79%, n=649) respondents (N=2298, $\chi^2=21.90$, df=1, p=.001). Minorities (88%, n=415) were significantly more supportive than White (83%, n=1504) respondents (N=2295, $\chi^2=7.39$, df=1, p=.007). Professionals in entry- (87%, n=695) and mid-level (86%, n=589) positions were significantly more supportive than those in upper level (76%, n=434) positions in their organizations (N=2065, $\chi^2=32.96$, df=2, p=.001). Professionals holding bachelors (89%, n=237) and masters (85%, n=1350) degrees were significantly more supportive than those holding terminal (74%, n=337) degrees (N=2306, $\chi^2=37.27$, df=2, p=.001). No statistical differences were found when institutional size, 2-year versus 4-year type, and those having a professional certification versus those without such a certification were compared.

Earning credits and recording professional development activities.

Eight-six percent of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they would participate in a program where continuing professional education credits could be voluntarily earned and recorded as a record of professional achievement. Women (89%, n=1316) were significantly more supportive than male (82%, n=645) respondents (N=2297, $\chi^2=23.07$, df=1, p=.001). Minorities (91%, n=427) were significantly more supportive than White (86%, n=1563) respondents (N=2293, $\chi^2=7.02$, df=1, p=.008). Professionals in entry- (93%, n=746) and mid-level (88%, n=609) positions were significantly more supportive than those in upper level (76%, n=436) positions in their organizations (N=2066, $\chi^2=78.59$, df=2, p=.001). Professionals holding bachelors (96%, n=257) and masters (89%, n=1408) degrees were significantly more supportive than those holding terminal degrees (N=2304, $\chi^2=95.91$, df=2, p=.001). No statistical differences were found when institutional size, 2-year versus 4-year type, and those having a professional certification versus those without such a certification were compared.

Creating a career development transcript.

Eighty-four percent of respondents favored creating a program where they could create their own career development transcript. Women (87%, n=1285) were significantly more supportive than male (80%, n=661) respondents (N=2302, $\chi^2=17.44$, df=1, p=.001). Minorities (90%, n=423) were significantly more supportive than White (83%, n=1522) respondents (N=2298, $\chi^2=12.18$, df=1, p=.001). Professionals in entry- (90%, n=723) and mid-level (85%, n=586) positions were significantly more

supportive than those in upper level (75%, n=430) positions in their organizations (N=2072, $\chi^2=58.48$, df=2, p=.001). Professionals holding bachelors (96%, n=255) and masters (86%, n=1361) degrees were significantly more supportive than those holding terminal (73%, n=334) degrees (N=2310, $\chi^2=76.24$, df=2, p=.001). No statistical differences were found when institutional size, 2-year versus 4-year type, and those having a professional certification versus those without such a certification were compared.

Seeking voluntary professional certification.

Eight-six percent of respondents indicated support for the creation of a program where members, on a voluntary basis, could seek professional certification by their association based on their academic preparation, experience in the field, and continuing professional education. Women (89%, n=1312) were significantly more supportive than male (83%, n=681) respondents (N=2301, $\chi^2=18.59$, df=1, p=.001). Minorities (92%, n=432) were significantly more supportive than White (86%, n=1569) respondents (N=2269, $\chi^2=11.04$, df=1, p=.001). Professionals in entry- (89%, n=717) and mid-level (89%, n=616) positions were significantly more supportive than those in upper level (81%, n=462) positions in their organizations (N=2066, $\chi^2=27.30$, df=2, p=.001). Professionals holding bachelors (94%, n=251) and masters (88%, n=1401) degrees were significantly more supportive than those holding terminal (78%, n=353) degrees (N=2308, $\chi^2=50.27$, df=2, p=.001). No statistical differences were found when institutional size, 2-year versus 4-year type, and those having a professional certification versus those without such a certification were compared.

DISCUSSION

In the past and even during the work of this Task Force, concerns have been raised about the need for and the effect of certification efforts. Merrily Dunn, a member of the ACPA Task Force on Certification, listed the cost of attending programs, testing concerns, organizational control and power issues, discrimination, and lack of consensus on core competencies as some of the issues raised by ACPA members who attended the 2005 conference session on certification (M. Dunn, personal communication, April 4, 2005). Carpenter (1998) cites a lack of consensus about what constitutes appropriate professional practice, who best should control or prescribe practices on individual campuses, the proper role of professional associations, jurisdictional disputes among generalist and specialized organizations, and diversity among others (p. 162). This study shows, however, there is much more support for such ideas among ACPA respondents than perhaps previously thought. This holds true especially for women, minorities, entry-level professionals, and those holding bachelors degrees. Just as interesting, respondents at smaller institutions and community colleges were as supportive as student affairs staff members at larger institutions. Concerns about the cost of attending programs that carry continuing education units and adversely affecting less experienced professionals in our field may be overblown.

At least three quarters of every group supported the idea of creating a more intentional program of professional development activities based on a student affairs curriculum. They support the creation of a certification process that would assign continuing professional education credits to programs that meet established criteria. They support mechanisms that would allow them to earn continuing education units, record their professional development activity, and receive recognition by their association for that effort. In most instances, this support fell in the 85% to 90% range. Those who were less supportive tended to be well-established professionals who hold upper-level positions at their institutions, holders of terminal degrees, and may be in the latter stages of their careers.

References

- Carpenter, D. S. (1998). Continuing professional education in student affairs.
 In N. Evans & C. Phelps (Eds.). *The state of the art of preparation and practice in student affairs* (pp. 159-176). Washington, DC: American College Personnel Association.

An Analysis of the Comments Contained in the Membership Survey on Certification: A Follow-up Report to ACPA's Task Force on Certification

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OCTOBER 2005

Executive Summary

The Task Force on Certification convened in January of 2005 for the purpose of discussing how the Association might develop a process for the assessment of professional competencies and needs, continuing professional education, and recognition and reporting systems for such an effort. The members of the Task Force decided to poll the membership on its interest in such a process.

All ACPA members were eligible to participate in this study. At the time the survey was posted, the membership database consisted of 6,815 viable email addresses. A total of 2,346 (34.4%) responses were received.

The typical ACPA respondent was more likely to be a student affairs practitioner who was a White female, holding a Masters degree, with nine years of experience in a mid-level position within her department at a 4-year institution with a student enrollment of more than 10,000 students. The respondent group was representative of the membership at large with respect to race but not by type of institution or highest degree obtained.

The assessment was completed in March and a report summarizing the quantitative data was delivered to the Task Force in late March of 2005. As a second phase of this assessment, Steve Janosik and Joan Hirt agreed to analyze the comments made by respondents to each item on the questionnaire. This report serves as a preliminary analysis of those data.

Respondents to the six items on the survey offered a total of 1,663 comments. Of those, more than half (N=879, 53%) either endorsed or opposed the idea of intentional professional development while the remaining 47% did not reveal a position.

Of the 879 comments that expressed a position, the overwhelming majority favored the development of a continuing education program.

Regardless of position (endorsement or opposition) respondents expressed concerns about logistical issues such as the costs associated with engaging in a professional development program, what the content of the program might be, and when/where development programs would be offered.

An Analysis of the Comments Contained in the Membership Survey of Certification:

A FOLLOW-UP REPORT TO ACPA'S TASK FORCE ON CERTIFICATION

Dr. Gregory S. Blimling, as President-Elect of the American College Personnel Association (ACPA), convened the Task Force on Certification in January of 2005 for the purpose of discussing how the Association might develop a process for the assessment of professional competencies and needs, continuing professional education, and recognition and reporting systems for such an effort. During this meeting, the members of the Task Force decided to poll the membership on its interest in programs that would provide more intentional professional development activities. The assessment was completed in March and a report summarizing the quantitative data was delivered to the Task Force in late March of 2005.

These results were shared with the membership in a panel discussion and the professional preparation commission meeting at the 2005 Annual conference. Merrily Dunn, Kent Porterfield, and Sarah Schoper provided summaries of these discussions. After the annual conference, Kent Porterfield and Merrily Dunn were named as co-chairs of the Task Force.

As a second phase of this assessment, Steve Janosik and Joan Hirt agreed to analyze the comments made by respondents to each item on the questionnaire. This report serves as a preliminary analysis of those data.

METHODS

Instrument

A short questionnaire was developed and revised through several rounds of email exchanges with Task Force members. The final instrument consisted of six questions designed to evaluate support for various program elements. Participants were given four response options to each of these questions (Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree, and Strongly Disagree). In addition, participants were encouraged to comment on each item. Ten other items solicited demographic information about the respondent. Once the Task Force members approved the items, the questionnaire was converted to an electronic form and permission was obtained to host the survey on the computer servers at Virginia Tech.

Participants

All ACPA members were eligible to participate in this study. At the time the survey was posted, the membership database consisted of 6,815 viable email addresses. This number represented the vast majority of members but did not include those who had requested not to be contacted by ACPA or those who do not use email as a primary form of communication.

ACPA members were contacted by email, invited to participate in the study, and directed to the URL where the electronic survey could be found. Participants were assured that their responses would remain confidential and used as grouped data. Two reminder emails were sent in an effort to increase the response rate.

Data Analysis

The comments offered by respondents were reviewed repeatedly to identify common verbiage and concepts. The common verbiage and concepts were then collapsed into five basic groups. The first group, Unequivocal Endorsement (UE), consisted of all comments in which the participant reported support for a professional development program without any questions or stipulations. Comments assigned to the Equivocal Endorsement (EE) group were those that supported developing a program but only if certain actions were undertaken or certain questions were addressed. The third group of comments, Equivocal Opposition (EO), included all remarks that reflected opposition

to developing a program unless certain actions were undertaken or certain questions were addressed. In the Unequivocal Opposition (UO) group, responses revealed opposition to developing a program without any questions or stipulations. All those comments that did not meet the definitions associated with one of the first four groups were assigned to a Miscellaneous category.

Comments were initially assigned to categories independently by two trained evaluators. Next, the two raters compared how they assigned each comment and, if they had assigned a comment to different categories, they discussed those differences and agreed upon which category to which the comment should be assigned.

After all comments were assigned to a single category, we calculated the frequency of comments assigned to each of the five groups for each of the six items on the survey. Because the Miscellaneous comments did not reflect a direction with respect to professional development (i.e., endorsement or opposition) we also calculated the percentage of comments in each of the four directional groups (UE, EE, EO, UO) when the Miscellaneous comments were deducted from the total number of comments offered in response to each survey item.

Once the initial assignment of data was completed, a secondary sort of the comments was conducted. The secondary analysis identified the issues raised by respondents regarding the design of a professional development program. Three themes emerged. The first focused on logistical issues (e.g., costs of such a program, where such programs would be offered.). The second theme included those comments that raised issues of professionalism (e.g., who would develop the curriculum, the role of graduate education in professional development initiatives). The third were comments about the survey items or the wording of items on the survey. The results revealed the types of issues that are important when designing a development initiative.

RESULTS

A total of 2,346 (34.4%) individuals responded to the survey. These participants offered a total of 1,663 comments. Just over half (N=879, 53%) of the comments could be assigned to one of the four directional categories (UE, EE, EO, UO).

Characteristics

The typical respondent was more likely to be a student affairs practitioner who was a White female, holding a Masters degree, with nine years of experience in a mid-level position within her department at a 4-year institution with a student enrollment of more than 10,000 students. To test whether the sample was representative of the Association's membership, selected characteristics of the respondent group were compared with the total membership. A chi-square test revealed no significant difference between the respondents and the membership when race was compared ($\chi^2 = 10.08$, $df=5$, $p=.073$). Additional analyses revealed that the two groups were significantly different when type of institution and highest degree earned were examined. Respondents were more likely to work at 4-year institutions than was the membership at large ($\chi^2 = 5.01$, $df=1$, $p=.024$) and more likely to have earned a Master's degree or a doctorate but less likely to have earned a bachelor's degree ($\chi^2 = 131.27$, $df=3$, $p=.000$). Other characteristics could not be compared because the metrics used in the respective data sets were not congruent. The specific composition of the respondent group can be found in Table 1.

Responses to Program Elements

In general, the majority of comments that reflected a direction (i.e., endorsement or opposition) supported the creation of a more intentional program for professional development. The data are summarized in Table 2.

Item 1: Developing a defined professional development curriculum.

In the quantitative analysis, 93% of respondents supported an effort by ACPA to develop a professional development curriculum based on core professional competencies to help individuals make more purposeful decisions about their professional development. The qualitative findings support the quantitative analysis. Half (50%) of all comments and 84% of all directional comments endorse the notion of a professional development curriculum.

Those who supported the development of a curriculum noted:

It would be very nice to have some guidance for new professionals and some reminder classes for more experienced professionals.

This would be especially beneficial to new professionals. It would provide guidance with defining their roles within their positions as well as providing direction on how best to make their mark in the field.

There were comments (17%) that suggested opposition to such a curriculum, however. Concerns centered around the breadth of knowledge associated with the profession: No, no, no. This would absolutely kill what level of diversity of scholarship we are able to maintain in the field.

With fields of study so varied, a professional core is impractical.

Table 1: Demographic Characteristics of Respondents (n=2,346)

Gender	%	n
Female	64.4	1495
Male	35.6	828
Race		
African-American	9.0	209
Asian-American	2.6	61
Hispanic or Latino	3.8	87
White; non-Hispanic	79.5	1844
Multiracial	2.5	59
Other	2.5	59
Highest Degree Earned		
Bachelors	11.5	267
Masters	68.6	1598
Doctorate	20.0	466
Employment Status		
Practitioner	92.8	2026
Faculty Member	7.2	158
Organizational Level		
Entry	38.7	808
Mid	33.4	697
Upper	27.9	582
Institutional Type		
2-year	4.8	99
4-year	95.2	1948
Institutional Size		
Small (1 - 4,500)	21.1	519
Medium (4,001- 10,000)	18.2	448
Large (> 10,000)	60.7	1496

*Numbers may not total to 100% due to missing data. NCD = no comparable data.

Table 2: Summary of All and Directional Comments by Item and Group
(Total N=1663, Directional N=879)

Item/Group	Total n	% total n	% Directional n
1: Develop Professional Development Curriculum. (Total n=400, Directional n=239)			
Unequivocal Endorsement	134	34	56
Equivocal Endorsement	65	16	27
Equivocal Opposition	9	2	4
Unequivocal Opposition	31	8	13
Miscellaneous	161	40	
2: Offer Some Programs at Conferences. (Total n=242, Directional n=143)			
Unequivocal Endorsement	85	35	59
Equivocal Endorsement	43	18	30
Equivocal Opposition	8	3	6
Unequivocal Opposition	7	3	5
Miscellaneous	99	41	
3: Certify Attendance and Grant CPUs (Total n=255, Directional n=129)			
Unequivocal Endorsement	53	21	41
Equivocal Endorsement	46	19	36
Equivocal Opposition	11	4	9
Unequivocal Opposition	19	7	15
Miscellaneous	126	49	
4. Record Professional Development (total n=226, directional n=119)			
Unequivocal Endorsement	39	17	33
Equivocal Endorsement	56	25	47
Equivocal Opposition	11	5	9
Unequivocal Opposition	11	5	9
Miscellaneous	107	48	
5: Verify Professional Involvement (Total n=263, Directional n=133)			
Unequivocal Endorsement	59	22	44
Equivocal Endorsement	41	16	31
Equivocal Opposition	7	3	5
Unequivocal Opposition	22	10	17
Miscellaneous	130	49	
6: Seek Voluntary Certification (Total n=277, Directional n=116)			
Unequivocal Endorsement	44	16	38
Equivocal Endorsement	22	10	19
Equivocal Opposition	10	3	9
Unequivocal Opposition	35	13	30
Miscellaneous	161	58	

Item 2: Offering programs based on a curriculum.

Ninety-three percent of respondents in the quantitative analysis agreed or strongly agreed that it would be helpful if ACPA offered some conference programs and regional workshops based on this curriculum on a consistent basis. The qualitative results reveal that 53% of all comments and 89% of directional comments supported the idea of offering some programs at conferences. The following comments are illustrative of this sentiment:

Again, yes. I attended the ACPA National Conference two years ago and found everything to be too vague for my needs/interests. For those of us who are not in the top positions of a university and are more specialized in topical areas, this would be especially useful - especially if there was some collaboration between ACPA and other organizations.

Absolutely! If ACPA is going to create a core curriculum or core professional competencies, then these should be discussed at conferences and in conference programs for all of us.

Of the 11% of comments opposed to the notion of offering programs based on a curriculum, most related to the need for a curriculum:

Again, I do not understand how this relates to our prep programs. If they are doing their job, what is this for? How does this relate to NASPA and their role in the profession? I would not see this as something to pursue until after the two associations finally merge.

I do not find that this would be necessary. If the curriculum is clearly explained to begin with, I'm not sure why you would need continuous programming annually. I would recommend occasional programs and workshops. Perhaps it could be done as a pre-conference workshop every other year.

Item 3: Certifying attendance and assigning continuing professional education credits.

In the quantitative findings, 83% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they would support an effort to certify attendance at professional development programs that met a set of agreed upon standards by assigning continuing professional education credits to them. Of the 255 comments offered by participants in response to this item, 40% of all comments and 73% of directional comments embraced this idea. Two comments typical of these responses appear below:

I think such activities would further legitimize participation at the National Conference. Some institutions only send staff to attend if they are presenting or recruiting. I think if such offerings were available, individuals might find it easier to legitimize their attendance.

Other professions do this. I think it would increase the professionalism of our practitioners and help keep us up-to-date on advances, theories, and practices in the field.

Those opposed to the notion of CPEs (24% of comments) expressed concern about their utility: As someone with one foot in Information Technology, I am very familiar with professional certification (and hold several IT certifications). I do not see certification as useful in a field as broad and dynamic as student affairs. *If* certification is appropriate then it should be left to the various discipline-specific professional organizations such as NIRSA, ACUHO-I, and NACA. I would hope that those organizations would be open to collaborating with others such as ACPA and NASPA if those organizations, at the behest of their members, created certifications.

I haven't found CPE's particularly useful...never collected any of the ones' available to me...if one is licensed to practice or keep a level of certification (Realtors, CPAs, etc) then it's necessary...and I don't support such a certification process for student affairs educators.

Item 4: Earning credits and recording professional development activities.

The qualitative results largely corroborate the findings of the quantitative analysis in which 86% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they would participate in a program where continuing professional education credits could be voluntarily earned and recorded as a record of professional achievement. Forty-two percent of all comments offered by participants endorsed the idea of a record. When only those comments that revealed a preference (endorsement v. opposition) are analyzed, the degree of endorsement climbs to 80%. The following comments illustrate how respondents feel:

I think this would be great and I hope it would encourage professionals to try to learn as much as they can at conferences. I would also hope that these CPE credits could/would come from other professional development conferences we attend, such as NACA, NASPA, etc.

Several other professions do a practice similar to this; having an on-going record of professional development could encourage people to look critically at their skills and be intentional about staying current with their practice.

Of the 18% of comments that were opposed to earning credits and recording development activities, most related to issues of access and/or the need for such an approach: Only if it was completely voluntary and for personal use. I would not want employers to begin to expect these credits because that could be disadvantageous to those who do not have equal opportunity to obtain them.

I would stay away from those programs in particular because of the message it sends about certification. We are not in a technical field. Working to become more competent in our knowledge base and skills should be our goal; not certification and receipt of credits.

Item 5: Creating a career development transcript.

Quantitative analysis revealed that 84% of respondents favored designing a program where they could create their own career development transcript. The comments offered by respondents support that contention: 38% of all comments and 75% of comments that express a direction endorse this element of a professional development program, as the following suggest:

Many universities offer something like this (co-curricular portfolio) for their students; why not use it for student affairs professionals as well?

That would help people keep track of all of the things we do. I know that all of the stuff I have done could not fit on a resume unless I were to go to a 7 page resume which no one wants to read.

The comments that opposed the idea of a transcript reflected two concerns. Some were apprehensive about the bureaucracy that would be needed while others questioned what such a document reflected:

Do you mean ACPA would maintain a "transcript"? No, that's each person's responsibility and seems like a lot of administrative tracking that is not suitable for a professional organization. Who will do this inputting and recording? The central staff? I'm not in favor of this.

I think that there are many that attend and accumulate data for resumes and such, and while it appears impressive in quantity and titles, I don't necessarily think that it translates to a higher quality of professional practice. In fact, I believe that perhaps due to "politics" many spend excessive time on their experiences and less on conducting the actual research and work needed to truly upgrade professional practice.

Item 6: Seeking voluntary professional certification.

Finally, the analysis of comments related to seeking voluntary professional certification corroborates the findings of the quantitative analysis. Eight-six percent of respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the idea of a program where members, on a voluntary basis, could seek professional certification by their association. Twenty-six percent of all comments, and 57% of directional comments endorse this notion of professional certification:

A program like this should already be in existence because it is definitely needed and would be beneficial to all ACPA members.

I would do it if it was only voluntary, but I feel it would be good for the profession if professional certification were required.

There was greater opposition to the idea of voluntary certification than to other items (39% of directional comments). Those opposed to voluntary certification expressed concerns about the impact such a move might have on the profession as well as on some professionals:

This will hurt us more in the academy with our faculty colleagues than any other marginalizing activity we've ever initiated...we're making good progress in our collaborations in the academy...don't mess it up by some poorly constructed certification process designed to prove we know something worth contributing...The president's cabinet, the faculty senate, the Dean's council...none of them will give a bit of credence to us or this certification, in my view.

I completely disagree with the idea of certification. Even though it is being slated as voluntary, I see some institutions making it a part of their position qualifications eventually making it necessary for professionals who may not be able to afford to obtain the certification. Call this what it is, a money maker that doesn't really make a huge difference in the professional's lives. Again, to have to pay additional money to get certified may not be possible or desirable to everyone.

DISCUSSION

In general, the qualitative results reinforce the quantitative findings presented in the previous report by Janosik and Carpenter (2005). It is important, however to consider a few discrepancies in such an interpretation. First, only 34% of the eligible participants responded to the survey at all, and the demographic characteristics of respondents differed from the membership at large in terms highest degree earned and type institution. It is also possible that those who participated in a study sponsored by the Association may be those who are more interested in professional issues. The findings should be interpreted in that context.

Second, while the majority of directional comments offered in response to all six items endorsed the notion of intentional professional development, there were dissenters. Those who opposed the idea were as committed to their convictions as those who supported the idea.

Members of the Task Force might be well served to take these opinions into account and build support for such a program before attempting to successfully implement it.

Finally, it is essential to note that nearly half (n=784, 47%) of the 1,663 comments offered by respondents were assigned to the Miscellaneous category. In general, miscellaneous comments fell into one of two groups. Some were comments about the survey itself and wording of items on the survey. A large number of miscellaneous comments offered information and/or suggestions about continuing education:

Other professions do this—it might be useful to get input/feedback about the potential obstacles they have encountered in implementing such a program.

Where is such a push coming from? What institutions or agencies are asking for such a "certification?" Have we seen accreditation bodies asking for this? I was on my campus's steering committee for our last review (2004) and the our region's criteria now seem to favor student affairs, as opposed to mandating justification or showing credentials for our type of work. Has there been a demonstrated need for this from OUTSIDE of our profession, or is this another case of "student affairs" feeling we need to justify our existence on the campus? I feel this discussion comes around every 10 years, namely, "we are as important to the campus as the academic enterprise." And then we spend lots of time and energy figuring out a new way to prove it. It's a cycle that I think we waste time and energy on, and one that is not worth it.

It is important for the findings to be interpreted in light of the fact that nearly half of the comments neither endorsed nor opposed the idea of an intentional professional development program.

Despite these caveats, the qualitative results corroborate the analyses of the quantitative data in the study. Namely, a large majority of comments favor a professional development program. This endorsement does not come without stipulations. Issues of access, cost, content, delivery mechanism and the like will need to be addressed before members embrace such a program. Additionally, there is a strong sentiment that certification leads to labeling individuals (those who have it v. those who don't, those in good standing v. those who are not). Labeling is can be interpreted by members as antithetical to the notion of unconditional positive regard for individuals that under girds professional practice.

Finally, it is important to point out that the analysis reported herein reinforces the summaries of comments offered at the national conference in 2005 and reported by Dunn, Porterfield, and Schoper. In all, this report adds to the body of evidence that supports the development of a continuing education program for student affairs professionals. If considered in conjunction with the results from the quantitative study, the findings go beyond the anecdotal data collected heretofore and can be of assistance as the Task Force considers whether to institute a professional development program and, if so, how to go about designing such a program.

References

- Carpenter, D. S. (1998). Continuing professional education in student affairs. In N. Evans & C. Phelps (Eds.). *The state of the art of preparation and practice in student affairs* (pp. 159-176). Washington, DC: American College Personnel Association.
- Janosik, S. M. & Carpenter, D. S. (2005). *A report to ACPA's Task Force on Certification*. Washington, DC: American College Personnel Association.

The Steering Committee on Professional Competencies and Curriculum

In the fall of 2004, Gregory S. Blimling convened a group to consider the establishment of the National Institute for Student Affairs Certification (NISAC) and discuss how American College Personnel Association (ACPA) might make progress on ensuring and improving the quality of the workforce in student affairs. This group was designated as the Task Force on Certification and began its deliberations in January 2005.

As part of its activities, members of the Task Force assessed the level of member support for an intentional professional development program. Two reports were submitted to the Task Force in March (Janosik & Carpenter, 2005) and October (Janosik & Hirt, 2005) respectively. The findings suggested that large majorities of respondents supported the idea of developing a professional development program around a standard student affairs curriculum, ensuring program quality by offering continuing professional education credits to selected programs meeting certain criteria, certifying individual attendance at such programs, developing and managing a record keeping system for those who choose to participate voluntarily in such a program, and creating a recognition program for those who commit themselves to becoming more intentional about their professional development activities.

A recurring topic of conversation among Task Force members concerns the creation of a student affairs curriculum. Some work on a curriculum, based on the CAS standards for professional preparation programs, has been already completed (Janosik, 2001). The purpose of the student affairs curriculum is to identify the core topics most pertinent to the profession. A version of this curriculum has been reviewed by the executive and program committees of another national association and is currently being used to help structure its national conference. Members of the Task Force, research participants, and those who have commented on the activities of the Task Force have suggested that professional competencies might provide another framework for an intentional professional development program.

To that end, the purpose of the Steering Committee on Professional Competencies and Curriculum is (a) build on the content analysis work (professional competencies) of a doctoral student group commissioned to prepare a preliminary report, (b) synthesize and connect competencies to a "general" student affairs curriculum, (c) assess the degree of fit between the two, (d) comment on the utility of these structures, and (e) make recommendations to the Task Force on Certification on how these two frameworks might be used to promote an intentional professional development program for use by ACPA and other professional associations.

The review and preliminary analysis will be completed by Sarah Schoper and a small group of her doctoral student colleagues. Their report should be delivered to the Steering Committee by the end of January, 2006. The Steering Committee should have a work product ready for presentation, review, discussion, and feedback by the 2006 ACPA Convention (March 19-22) in Indianapolis. Ideally, the Steering Committee would review the feedback received at the Convention and complete its final report and recommendations by the end of April, 2006. The Task Force would then review the work of the Steering Committee in May-June, 2006. However, at this time, this is merely a suggested timeline.

Among the resources being reviewed in this process are those listed below:

- Baier, J. L. (1992). *A study of student affairs functions and administrative responsibilities within university system offices*. NASPA Journal, 29, 189-198.
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ACPA-College Student Educators International, headquartered in Washington, DC, at the National Center for Higher Education and founded in 1924, leads the way in research and dissemination of knowledge on college student learning. Its publications, including JOURNAL OF COLLEGE STUDENT DEVELOPMENT, first introduced in 1943, and ABOUT CAMPUS, a collaborative view of in- and out-of-the classroom learning, are widely recognized within the higher education community. Its network of national and international members--serving as college student educators-affect policies, practices, and programs in the higher education community, advocating for social justice and human dignity rights of its members who prepare student to live and work in a global and diverse world.

