

Council for the Advancement of Standards Update: Implementing the Results

Dan Bureau & Monica L. Miranda

Over the course of the last nine months, we've provided an article for each step of the self-assessment and program review process for Fraternity and Sorority Advising Programs (FSAP) standards provided by [CAS](#) in partnership with AFA. To review past issues, please consult the "Guides and Updates" section of [the AFA CAS webpage](#). This update for October focuses on the roles and value of an external review process added to the CAS Program Review process.

We have addressed the functions and roles of the external reviewer(s) in past issues as part of walking you through the steps of CAS Self-Assessment and Program Review. It is first important to remind you about how the steps of a complete Program Review will work.

Part 1: Self-Assessment: The department (FSAP or other umbrella unit) conducts a review of the [CAS Standards](#). This is a process internal to the department within the institution. This process requires the determination of alignment between FSAP operations and the CAS Standards through using the [CAS Self-Assessment Guide \(SAG\)](#). Departments should compile evidence to justify their scoring on the SAG.

Part 2: Internal Self-Assessment and Internal Review Team (IRT): most campuses who use CAS at least incorporate an *internal to the institution but external to the department* team to review evidence compiled by the department and to ascertain their own perception of the FSAP's alignment with the Standards. Past resources explain how to recruit, train, and manage the IRT, but typically this is a committee of staff, faculty, and students who have understanding of, but are not involved in, the management of the FSAP on the campus. Some campuses have found it helpful to engage some number of individuals who really do not have a general understanding of the FSAP but may have perceptions and assumptions about the overall operations of the department. These committees typically consist of no more than 7-10. Again, review [past issues of the Association Update CAS updates](#) to better understand this process.

Part 3: External Review (Self-Assessment can become Program Review): External review is exactly what it sounds like: individuals external to the institution are invited to review the department and IRT reports. Often, most campuses doing program review will include an external review team of functional area experts who have some level of experience conducting assessment, and often they will have some level of experience with CAS. They may begin their review remotely as they look over the reports from each area (often times those are combined into one report) and begin to make some determinations of alignment between institutional

perceptions of the program, the CAS Standards, and what they know as experts in the field. Almost always they come to campus to conduct a number of interviews with key stakeholders that will help them get the information they need to identify (1) to what extent their perceptions are aligned with the institution's reports, (2) when there are discrepancies in perceptions, what are the potential causes/issues at play, and (3) what are strategies to help the FSAP (and potentially the larger institution become more strongly aligned with the CAS Standards.

It is important to note that it is the involvement of external parties, both those internal to the institution and external of the institution that makes self-assessment become a program review. This progression is explained in past issues as well. Program review tends to be held up as a more rigorous and thorough examination of a department. Self-assessment is good, but it becomes better when there are people external to the department who are reviewing sources of evidence and making their own determination of the FSAP reach, operations, functions, and overall effectiveness. Past issues of these updates provide insight into this progression.

Of course the decision to use an external review process as part of your Program Review should be determined prior to even launching the Self-Assessment. [As you consider this option, we have provided you a list of individuals who have self-identified as potential external reviewers.](#) The document found here will help you to see the list (in alpha order) and learn their credentials. Typically external reviewers expect honorarium and costs covered. A good plan is to provide at least a \$1500 stipend and cover costs for each of the reviewers on your team. As you strategize on the review team, we recommend three individuals, one serving as the lead, and representing diverse perspectives of the interfraternal world.

In November we will focus on how to integrate CAS into your work in order to implement your plan as well as lay the foundation for ongoing success within implementing the FSAP Standards. Please note there will be at least two sessions that we are aware of that cover CAS and will be held at the Annual Meeting. Should you want to talk through a review process, please reach out to [Dan](#) or [Monica](#) and we can schedule a time on site in Indianapolis.

CAS as a consortium exists of up to two appointees from 41 higher education and student affairs associations. By the end of 2019, we will have 50 sets of standards cutting across diverse functional areas. If you have any questions about the work we are doing for CAS on behalf of AFA, please contact us.