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Introduction

Congratulations! By obtaining a copy of *AACRAO's Professional Development Guidelines for Registrars: A Self-Assessment*, you have taken an important first step in expanding your professional skills and demonstrating your commitment to improving the operation of your office. The *Assessment* is an ideal training handbook for new professionals as it provides a comprehensive overview of the registrar's role and responsibilities.

Just as critical as understanding what the *Assessment* is designed to do is being aware of what it will not provide. The *Assessment* is not a book of answers. Quite the contrary, it is a book of questions! It is intended to stimulate thought, encourage self-reflection, and evaluate policies and procedures. The design follows much the same approach as a consultant would if hired to evaluate policies and procedures, beginning with a series of well-established and generally accepted standards. The *Assessment* provides a cost effective and simple way to gain the same benefits.

While extremely valuable as an assessment tool, the *Assessment* should not be considered a one-time "fix" for problems. Rather, it should be used routinely to identify areas where improvement is needed, to set goals for the future, and as a reference for principles of good practice.

One of the best means of utilizing the *Assessment* is in a workshop format. Bringing together a number of practitioners under the guidance of veteran facilitators allows for sharing of ideas and the emergence of best practices, thereby enhancing the benefit derived from the *Assessment* itself. A suggested workshop format, including timeline and helpful instructions, can be found in Chapter 9 and Appendix A.

Since responsibilities within registrar's offices vary considerably from institution to institution and historical, organizational, and philosophical factors influence institutional policies and procedures, the *Assessment* was developed with a broad, all-inclusive ap-

proach. Whether your institution has all the latest technological advances or you are just considering online records, the *Assessment* can provide a measure of your effectiveness in meeting institutional obligations.

Format

The *Assessment* is arranged by topical area with chapters addressing most basic registrar functions. Within each chapter are Basic Principles, which provide a foundation for the discussion topic and guide the development of the questions that follow. The questions provide a framework within which the issue can be fully explored. They give direction, evoke thought, and allow for a variety of approaches to a given topic. The response column can be used to create an inventory of items which require additional attention. Since the responses are, in effect, a self-appraisal, it is not possible to establish standard answers although a consensus of opinion will often emerge. In most cases, a “Yes” response indicates a familiarity with the subject matter and no further action is required. A response of “No” might indicate an area of concern. Items marked “Action Needed” require additional follow-up and those marked “N/A” are not applicable to your particular office or situation. Action Plan items are provided to expand your expertise and allow more in-depth study of a topic. Many are also well suited for engaging staff in the learning process. Finally, a Further Reading section has been added to the end of each chapter to direct the reader to useful resources on the topics discussed.

Historical Preface

The *Self Audit Manual for Registrars* was originally developed by the Kentucky Association of the Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers (KACRAO) with Ray Stines serving as editor. The original authors of this document were Larry N. Craft, R. Kent Curtis, Wilson Gantt, David E. Gillespie, Rhea P. Lazarus, Eddie W. Morris, Elbert W. Ockerman, Sister Mary Paul Walsh, and Howard Barnett.

In 1975, a committee composed of the original contributors plus Karen Carey, Stephen House, Jerry Legere, and chaired by Howard Barnett revised the *Manual*. The publication was extensively revised by KACRAO under the sponsorship of an AACRAO Task Force chaired by Jack Demitroff with Roger Baker and Jerry Legere in 1979. The contributors for that revision included Jim Alford, Roger Baker, Karen Carey, Larry Craft, Wilson Grant, Stephen House, Jerry Legere, Elbert W. Ockerman, and Dan Seaver.

In 1986, the AACRAO Executive Committee sought to have the *Manual* updated and revised. This task was given to the Registration Techniques Committee comprised of the following individuals: Thomas Bilger, Ted Atkinson, Donald Gentsch, Harris Olson, Kathy Plante, Lois Poissant, and Charles Selden. With the completion of the revised edition in 1987, the title of the publication was changed to *Professional Development Guidelines for Registrars: A Self-Audit*.

In 2000, a volunteer committee of AACRAO members brought the document into the new millennium. Modifications were

done in the areas of technology, legal issues, and graduation/commencement; and appendices were added to expand upon certain topics and provide users with information beyond the scope of the chapter discussions. The committee was comprised of Kimra Schipporeit, Lyannae Diefenbach, Tim Ebner, John Krecek, Rodney W. Moore and Nancy Penna.

In 2012, a new committee of professionals came together to make some important updates to the publication, giving it the new title of *Self-Assessment* in lieu of *Self-Audit*. The change in title is intended to reflect a positive approach to the task of self-reflection and the benefit of continuous quality improvement. This new edition explores how

emergent technology can be used to improve operations within the Registrar's Office; societal factors that registrars should consider as they review current practices; regulatory updates that dictate certain procedures for students who are Veterans; and other timely legal issues. New to this edition is the inclusion of a comprehensive plan to address "Action Needed" items identified by the *Self-Assessment*, so that deficiencies can not only be identified but remediated.

The *Self-Assessment* is published as a tool to develop the registrar staff, to improve and update compliance and service delivery for institutions and to support the implementation of best practices in the Office of the Registrar.