Direct Outcomes Assessment of Student Learning and COSMA: Program Initiatives, Implementation Strategies, and Assessment Tools

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This session on outcomes assessment of student learning is designed to assist individuals who may be interested in improving their sport management programs by focusing greater attention on direct outcomes assessment. Not only can this information be used by faculty and administrators to help improve sport management programs, but it also may be of assistance to those going through the COSMA accreditation process.

COSMA was established to promote and recognize excellence in sport management education in colleges and universities through accreditation (COSMA, 2008). The COSMA accreditation process is based on an outcomes-based assessment where excellence is evaluated based on the assessment of educational outcomes, rather than on inputs.

In the COSMA accreditation process, the most important principle used to evaluate the quality of the academic unit and sport management degree program(s) is the outcomes assessment requirements as specified in Principle 1 (COSMA, 2008). Within Principle 1 of the COSMA Self-Study guidelines, COSMA identifies the following five assessment areas that need to be addressed in the program’s outcomes assessment plan:

1. Mission and Goals:
2. Student Learning Outcome Measures:
3. Basic Skills Development
4. Personal Development
5. Operational Outcomes Measures:

For purposes of this panel discussion session, the presenters will be examining in greater detail the student learning outcomes component, particularly focusing on direct measures of student-learning outcomes. Detailed examples of program initiatives (e.g., required internships, senior capstone courses, comprehensive exams, portfolios) will be provided; and implementation strategies and assessment tools will be shared.

The panelists bring forth a wealth of knowledge on this topic including authoring of books and journal articles on the content area, COSMA peer review training experience, as well as application of these concepts within their programs and in their classrooms.

Enhancing the direct learning outcomes component within the learning outcomes plan will not only address a key required component of COSMA, but can be used to improve sport management programs, thereby improving the educational experience of the sport management student and improving the assessment process of sport management programs.