INTRODUCTION

We appreciate the time the external team took to participate in the academic program review of the College Student Personnel Administration program this past spring. We value the observations and recommendations they submitted for our consideration. The CSPA Program Committee met on May 21, 2012 for our annual retreat and carefully reviewed and discussed the report from the external team and provide our response for the next steps for the program.

STUDENT COHORTS

The CSPA Program Committee strongly believes the interaction of the cohort experience, full-time, part-time, and certificate students, enhances the learning opportunities in the classroom. In addition to the knowledge associated with the classes, the cohorts’ work on projects, group tasks, and presentations, allows for a variety of perspectives and experiences to support the learning. This might not be feasible with on-line courses. However, to enhance the connection with student affairs for those whose degrees are not in student personnel, the committee will investigate the possibility of workshops that might satisfy the requirements of the certificate program. While providing this educational opportunity at designated times, it is anticipated we could have sufficient participation to share varied experiences and potentially gain some financial support for the program.

The committee plans to review all aspects of the website, especially as the university moves to the new content management system. We concur that providing more information on the counseling and administration focus with the emphasis on the program’s outcomes can help interested parties in making informed choices.

ASSESSMENT

The portfolio sections correspond to the program’s outcomes in asking students to summarize and provide documentation related to the five sections. As we analyze the rubric used for scoring the sections, we will work with CARS to determine appropriate mechanisms to describe the linkage. We have selected five additional individuals to train as section reviewers of the portfolio to develop inter-rater reliability for the coming terms.

The program committee is excited about pursuing opportunities to share our experience with the portfolio as the culminating achievement of our students. We will be developing a program to present at conferences and workshops.
Collaboration between Academic Affairs and Student Affairs

The committee will work with Dr. Warner, Senior Vice President of Student Affairs and University Planning to develop an appropriate Memorandum of Understanding to document the support of the division and the graduate program. Philosophically this currently exists, however, in good practice a document describing the commitment and collaboration of the division and the program is warranted.

Our participation in the Graduate School meetings and Graduate Council meetings will continue and special attention will be paid to identifying and sharing accomplishments with Robin Anderson and the Graduate School. In addition, members of the program committee or faculty from the program will investigate attendance at graduate program sessions at both NASPA and ACPA (at ACPA the graduate faculty reception often conflicts with the JMU reception for alumni and colleagues).

Curriculum

The course descriptions and titles have been reviewed with slight modifications to meet the Graduate Catalog deadlines. The committee plans to ask each faculty member to submit their list of texts used in each class and review for connectivity, current edition, and support of program goals. In addition, we will observe each class in the next two academic years to support instructional style as well as content.

The committee will also begin work on the matrix recommended to “show alignment of program goals with CAS standards, and the new ACPA/NASPA competencies.” In addition, information from the recent alumni survey will assist in demonstrating strengths and limitations of the program in meeting its goals.

Field Experiences

The placement of students in their assistantships and practicums has been based on the philosophy that any student accepted to the program has the potential to be successful in any site. This philosophy is supported by the Senior Vice President for Student Affairs and University Planning. We also stress that we are training the students to be generalists in student affairs and thus anticipate they will experience a variety of departments within the division. As part of the recruiting process and offer of acceptance, the program committee has strived to meet the top choice of the student so we might get the “best” students in the program. As the students enter their second year, the placement is based on the type of experience the student needs to expand their skills, experience, and expertise. Clarification will be shared with site supervisors about the role of the graduate student and the assignment process. Consideration will be given to request the site supervisors’ top three choices, as well as anyone they believe would not be a good fit for their department/office. Meetings will also be held with site supervisors before the
selection process in February and before the assignment process in December to share the criteria and rationale for the process.

Within the program there are dual roles as those on the program committee may teach in the program and supervise students just as there are site supervisors who also teach in the program. At times, site supervisors may also be classmates (part-time students or certificate participants). The program committee recognizes the various roles they play, including adviser/mentor, and try to be clear with students when they meet with them as to the particular role at the time. In meetings with the site supervisors and faculty, we will discuss the various roles and ask their cooperation in clarifying with students to minimize confusion.

A student participating in an activity as part of a requirement of their program is covered as long as they are a student in good standing at the university. Students who took courses in the spring semester and have enrolled in classes for the fall semester are still considered JMU students during the summer. During orientation, though, information will be provided to the students regarding additional liability coverage they may want to consider.

**Program Commitment**

The program has been fortunate to have university staff from various divisions to participate as faculty, site supervisors, and on the program committee. We have invited individuals to co-teach classes to assist them in preparing for the possibility of teaching in the future and individuals have been included in the interview process for selection so they can better understand the role of the assistantships. To involve more individuals in the program, committees will be established to assist with tasks and projects within the program. Initially, a professional development committee and matrix committee will be formed. A variety of constituencies will be represented on these committees.

A strategic plan for the program will also be developed and a committee formed to review and look forward to the sustainability of the program.