

**SOURCEBOOK  
FOR  
FUTURES PLANNING**

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**Supplement IV:  
Creating Your Self-Study**

April 1996

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**National Association of Schools of Theatre**

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# SOURCEBOOK FOR FUTURES PLANNING

## Supplement IV: Creating Your Self-Study

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## INTRODUCTION

*Supplement IV* of the NAST *Sourcebook for Futures Planning*, 1991 Edition, focuses on self-study for theatre units. This supplement may be used alone, but greater breadth and depth are possible if used in conjunction with the *Sourcebook* and *Supplements I, II, and III* (currently available in hard copy only).

Throughout *Supplement IV*, references and concordance are made with the previous documents. Items in italics following “See:” (for example, “See: *Profiles*”) refer to sections of the *Sourcebook* or *Supplements I, II, or III*.

## DISCLAIMER

This text is analytical and consultative only. Its use is not required. Although produced by NAST, an accrediting organization, it is not a formal statement of accreditation standards, policies, or processes, and must not be referenced as such. Official accreditation documents such as the *Handbook*, containing accreditation standards, and the *Procedures for Institutional Membership* are available on the NAST Web site.

## OVERVIEW

- **This document is a resource for those planning self-study.**

- **It takes six elements:**

- Purposes for self-study
- Goals for self-study
- Self-study process
- Self-study document
- Standards
- Institutional conclusions

- **And helps planners:**

*Consider*

- Possibilities
- Desirabilities
- Necessities and givens

*Determine*

- Specifics
- Priorities
- Resources

*Examine*

- Synergies
- Ramifications
- Management and personnel requirements

- **Since self-study is done along with a large number of regular responsibilities, ideas in this text can save time and make things simpler by giving you a set of issues and tools with which to construct a reasonable, effective approach for your place and time.**
- **Whether, how, and which of these resources you use is an individual decision.**

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# CREATING YOUR SELF-STUDY

## OVERVIEW

The self-study is normally regarded as the most critical element in any institution's accreditation or reaccreditation effort. Of course, the self-study is part of a larger procedure that involves relationships and interdependencies among the self-study, the on-site visit, and the Commission review. Each of these accreditation elements has its own detailed procedures, and each requires attention to certain procedural details established from time to time by the institution and the reviewing organization. In this Supplement, we want to go beyond basic procedure and concentrate more on how you can develop a specific approach to self-study that is right for your institution at a particular time. The goal is to broaden horizons and explore creative possibilities, to present many techniques and possibilities rather than to promote a specific method or approach. Like all other parts of the *Sourcebook*, this Supplement intends to provide a tool kit rather than a blueprint. Since many readers will play a primary role in creating and managing a self-study, we hope to facilitate informed, thoughtful decisions that best serve each institution and its students. We hope that local use of this Supplement will generate more ideas, more sets of tools, and more potential uses for those tools as you create the blueprint and build your own self-study.



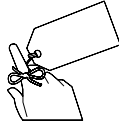
### TAKE NOTE

In NAST's view, the self-study serves the institution first, and only then, NAST.

- For institutions, the self-study should be creative, tailored to local needs and conditions, forthright, and illuminating. It should explore possibilities, provide baselines for future efforts, and support aspirations and improvement. It should focus on how well the theatre unit and the institution develop the knowledge and skills of students.
- For NAST, the self-study documents the theatre program and addresses its present and future, all with respect to standards and guidelines that appear in the *NAST Handbook*.

Self-study involves a process that leads to a document that in turn fosters a continuing review, reflection, and improvement. Both developing the self-study process and writing the self-study document involve establishing specific procedures, developing formats, and addressing appropriate sets of issues. Institutions and their leaders have a tremendous responsibility for making good decisions about purposes, goals, and objectives; about scope, depth, and intensity; about content; about procedure and schedule; and about specific responsibilities for various constituencies and personnel. The set of tools in this Supplement should help you make the best possible decisions about each of these areas by helping you think these decisions through rather than stipulating what you should do. The tools will also help you:

- focus your self-study on present conditions, results, and improvement;
- find the best self-study approach;
- tailor the self-study to meet specific needs;
- make the self-study useful beyond accreditation;
- avoid duplication of effort;
- develop your role as leader and manager of the project.



## REMEMBER

- Time spent in advance thinking about and organizing for self-study will save time and produce a better process, document, and final result.
- Although self-study involves all appropriate personnel, choices must be made about the timing and scope of individual participation.
- A critical first decision is how collegial the process of creating proposals about purposes, goals, process, and document will be.

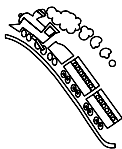


## TAKE NOTE

NAST recommends that self-study be more an artistic process than a technical exercise. In an artistic process, ends are specific and unique, ends primarily drive means, and creativity permeates the whole. In a technical exercise, ends are general and common, means drive ends, and procedure permeates the whole. To work artistically, it is critical to define the specific and unique ends that will guide your choice of means.

*Supplement IV* presents and discusses four topics central to self-study:

- **Purposes and Goals**  
Establishing specific, appropriate purposes and goals for a unique institution at a particular time.
- **Process and Document**  
Creating a local procedure and preparing a document that accomplish purposes and goals.
- **Standards and Conclusions**  
Addressing applicable NAST and institutional standards and developing analytical conclusions that lead to action following the self-study.
- **Putting It All Together**  
Producing synergy among all the components in a self-designed system that addresses needs and aspirations.



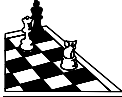
## KEEP GOING

It is not necessary to do extensive research to gain insight from these procedures. Often, it is revealing to scan through a procedure using only impressions and imagination. In any case, applications of individual imagination will make this effort both stimulating and useful.



## PART I:

### ESTABLISHING SELF-STUDY PURPOSES AND GOALS



#### CAUTION

It is critical to keep a distinction between (1) purposes and goals for the self-study and (2) purposes – vision, mission, goals, objectives, and action plans – for the theatre unit or the institution. The two relate to each other in various ways. Here, the terms are used as follows:

#### *For the self-study –*

- ◆ **Purposes**            What you want *this* self-study to accomplish
- ◆ **Goals**                Specific aspirations for achievement under the purposes

#### *For the theatre unit or institution –*

- ◆ **Purposes**            *Purposes* is a generic term referring to statements that when reviewed together, define the special, perhaps unique, function of an institution or program in the larger context of educational and artistic endeavor;
- ◆ **Vision**                *Vision* statements normally define what an entity aspires to be, and often whom it intends to serve;
- ◆ **Mission**              *Mission* statements articulate broad connections between the institution's efforts in theatre and the world of art and intellect;
- ◆ **Goals**                 *Goals* are broad statements of aim, the specific needs toward which strategic efforts are directed – normally less remote and more definitive than *mission*;
- ◆ **Objectives**          *Objectives* are the specific steps for reaching goals, normally measured in time among other indicators; and
- ◆ **Action Plans**        *Action plans* are specific means for achieving objectives, normally measured in dollars among other indicators.

With these sets of definitions and their uses in mind, let us focus on establishing purposes — broad aims — for the self-study you are about to engage and write.

# ESTABLISHING SELF-STUDY PURPOSES

*To determine specific purposes and their relative weight.*

## PROCEDURE

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### Consider:

1. The range of possible self-study purposes.

### *Explanatory Notes:*

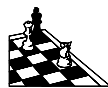
*For example:*

- Conduct a comprehensive periodic review.
- Evaluate what exists or is projected using NAST standards.
- Examine the effectiveness of parts and wholes, and especially the relationships of parts to wholes.
- Develop common perspectives on conditions and issues by involving constituencies in analysis, forecasting, or policy-making.
- Focus personnel on futures issues.
- Orient new administrators and faculty.
- Consider program deletions and additions.
- Generate lists of concerns and needs.
- Develop a planning document.
- Create priorities.
- Prepare for specific evaluations.
- Produce a reference document for the theatre unit.
- Produce a detailed explanatory document for others.
- Look at specific challenges for the future.
- Determine readiness to address challenges and opportunities.
- Focus on one or more components or programs.

2. Conditions and needs in our situation.

### Determine:

3. Specific purposes.
4. Priorities among purposes.

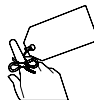


### CAUTION

These decisions establish a framework for many other decisions. Choose carefully.

### Examine:

5. Relationship of priorities to resources for self-study.
6. The contexts our priorities – broad aims – create for establishing goals – specific aspirations.



### REMEMBER

NAST encourages use of the self-study process and document in state reviews, internal reviews, and in other accreditation reviews. The Association is deeply concerned about accountability overkill, and wishes to promote efficiency in all aspects of the self-study process.

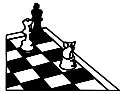
## ESTABLISHING SELF-STUDY GOALS — SPECIFIC ASPIRATIONS

### A CRITICAL FIRST QUESTION

How will goals for self-study relate to the purposes (may or may not be structured as mission, goals, and objectives statements) that presently guide the work of the institution and the theatre unit? *For example:*

- Are institutional and theatre unit statements accepted and secure enough to be used as a foundation for self-study?
- To what extent do you expect the self-study to alter the purposes that guide the theatre unit or the institution?
- Will consideration of such change be a goal of the self-study?

Your answers are critical because institutional and theatre unit statements of purposes are central to self-evaluation.



#### CAUTION

While answering such questions, it is important to make a distinction between altering institutional and theatre unit purposes and revising the way they are stated. While restatement does not always mean change, change almost always means restatement.

## **Specific Areas for Self-Study Goal Setting**

The possibilities are endless, but here are a number of areas where typical aspirations are focused in self-study projects. Both separately and in various combinations, they provide a rich set of possibilities.

- Elements of the field
- Operational components
- Curricular programs
- Change factors
- Change mechanisms
- Constituencies
- Futures issues

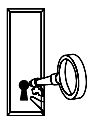
Let us look at each of these briefly.

### **ELEMENTS OF THE FIELD**

The list provided below is simply one of many possible formulations:

- Performance
- Education/Pedagogy
- Research
- Scholarship
- Criticism
- Policy Studies
- Multidisciplinary/Interdisciplinary
- Popular Culture
- Theatre Industry
- Support Systems

However, almost every unit, no matter how wide or narrow its scope or how focused its programs, has some relationship with the elements of the field listed here. For those creating a self-study, it is useful to review this list or an expanded one to determine the extent to which specific aspirations for relationships with each applicable element of the field produce specific goals for self-study. For example, a theatre unit might decide that a specific self-study goal is to determine the relationships between all its programs and theatre scholarship, or how all graduate programs address preparation for teaching, or to what extent aspirations for degree programs in a particular area are realistic in the immediate future.



#### **MORE IDEAS**

For further discussion of elements of the field, see *Sourcebook for Futures Planning*, pages 19 and 20.

## **Specific Areas for Self-Study Goal Setting**

### **OPERATIONAL COMPONENTS**

The list provided below from the NAST standards is only one of many possible formulations. Beyond meeting NAST standards, what issues should your self-study address with regard to:

- Institutional or theatre unit purposes
- Size and scope
- Finances
- Governance and administration
- Faculty and staff
- Facilities, equipment, health, and safety
- Library and learning resources
- Recruitment, admission-retention, record keeping, and advisement
- Published materials and Web sites
- Community involvement
- Mechanisms for evaluation, planning, and projection
- Program length and credit-granting policies

Each of these areas can be the source of specific self-study goals. For example, an institution might decide that a primary self-study goal will be to review issues of size and scope against projected resources; or purposes against admission and retention efforts; or the style and accuracy of published materials against all operational practices.

### **CURRICULAR PROGRAMS**

One formulation of the major considerations is:

- Student competencies
- Curricular requirements
- Connections and synergies among requirements
- Specific degree offerings
- Professional preparation



#### **MORE IDEAS**

Curricular programs can be reviewed in terms of elements of the field and against operational components – for example, how do our curricular requirements address the field of performance; how does our production schedule relate to time for scholarly study of theatre; how do our expectations for integration of script analysis and history in the senior year impact faculty qualifications and schedules?

## Specific Areas for Self-Study Goal Setting

### CHANGE FACTORS AND CHANGE MECHANISMS

We all know that change is inevitable, but we never know exactly when and how much change will occur, either due to our efforts, or to efforts of others. Many involved with self-study projects set goals for reviewing established institutional aspirations against change factors and change mechanisms.

#### *Change Factors*

Ideas/Values  
Information  
Knowledge  
Economic Conditions  
Technology  
Demographics  
Political Climate  
Religious Climate  
Cultural Climate  
Governance Patterns in Education and Culture  
Presence, Will, and Commitment of Visionaries  
Etc.

#### *Change Mechanisms*

Funding Patterns  
Reward Systems  
Legislation/Regulation  
Governance/Administrative Systems  
Standards-Setting Mechanisms  
Policy Analysis/Development Mechanisms  
Consultant/Advisory Systems  
Industry Decisions  
Technological Applications  
Advertising  
Publications/Studies/Research Reports  
Content of Formal Education  
Pathbreaking Conceptual Work in the Field  
Etc.



#### **MORE IDEAS**

- Distinguish between short- and long-term change.
- Distinguish between change you can and cannot influence or control.
- Change factors and mechanisms influence each other.
- Elements of the field, operations, curricula all can be reviewed against change factors and mechanisms.
- Budget both tangible and intangible resources for the unexpected.



#### **MORE IDEAS**

For additional details on change factors and change mechanisms, see *Sourcebook*, pages 21-24.

## Specific Areas for Self-Study Goal Setting

### CONSTITUENCIES

People both individually and in groups influence and are influenced by the work of the theatre unit. In terms of involvement, analysis of services, and achievements, what goals should your self-study have with regard to:

- Students
- Faculty
- Administrators
- Alumni
- Other Institutions
- Theatre Professionals
- Funding
- General Public
- Etc.



#### MORE IDEAS

For additional details on constituencies, see *Sourcebook*, pages 25 and 26. *Supplement II*, pages 25-38, address faculty issues.

### FUTURES

Many self-studies make a determined effort to address future prospects in terms of:

- Issues
- Trends
- Challenges
- Opportunities
- Potential Wild Cards



#### MORE IDEAS

For additional details regarding futures analyses, see *Sourcebook*, pages 43-51, 62, 64, 65.

## ESTABLISHING SPECIFIC SELF-STUDY GOALS

*To determine specific self-study goals and their relative weight in light of needs and resources.*

### PROCEDURE

---

#### *Explanatory Notes:*

#### **Consider:**

1. Possible range of goals.

*For example:*

- Elements of the field
- Operational components
- Curricular programs
- Change factors
- Change mechanisms
- Constituencies
- Futures issues

2. Conditions and needs to be addressed.

Include considerations about self-study purposes.

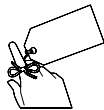
#### **Determine:**

3. Specific goals.
  - Cross cutting – overall
  - Focused – specific
4. Priorities among goals.

For example, which issues will be addressed in all or most parts of the self-study and which will be addressed only in one part?

#### **Examine:**

5. Relationships of self-study goals and priorities to purposes and resources.
6. Impact of goals and purposes priorities on self-study procedures.



#### **REMEMBER**

When developing your own combination of ideas and resources, do not make your analysis more complicated than necessary to the task.



#### **TAKE NOTE**

Once purposes, goals, and their priorities are determined, be sure they are (1) supported by all critical players, and (2) communicated to self-study participants. In other words, once you create the purposes and goals portion of your own self-study blueprint, make sure you have the requisite consensus and share it with all those involved in building the self-study.



## PART II:

### DEVELOPING YOUR SELF-STUDY PROCESS AND DOCUMENT



#### TAKE NOTE

- Self-study is a mechanism for seeking long-term stability and excellence, not a pass-fail exercise.
- Self-study should be a process that results in a document, not a document that demands process.
- The process is *your* process, not NAST's.
- The document is your document. It is used by NAST, among others.

# DEVELOPING YOUR SELF-STUDY PROCESS AND DOCUMENT

*To create a self-study project that addresses your self-study purposes and goals.*

## PROCEDURE

---

### Consider:

1. Previous decisions about purposes and goals.
2. Possibilities for process and document.

### *Explanatory Notes:*

*See:* “Establishing Self-Study Purposes” (page 4)  
“Establishing Self-Study Goals” (page 5)

*For example:*

- patterns of review and consultation
- data, information, opinion collection
- analysis
- synthesis – compilation
- outline(s)
- organizing themes
- schedules
- personnel

*See:* “Specific Choices for Self-Study Process and Document” (page 13)

### Determine:

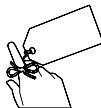
3. Procedure and document format that addresses your purposes and goals.
4. Tangible and intangible resources needed to conduct the procedure and produce the document.

*For example:*

- time
- money
- expertise
- commitment
- will
- the extent to which your community works well together.

### Examine:

5. Viability relationship among (1) purposes and goals, (2) process and document, and (3) resources.
6. Impact of proposed scope and approach on regular work of the theatre unit and institution.



### REMEMBER

NAST encourages decisions about process and document that minimize duplication of effort with other reviews.

## **SPECIFIC CHOICES FOR SELF-STUDY PROCESS AND DOCUMENT**

In running the above consider-determine-examine sequence, most institutions will find it useful to look at the following set of choices:

- among many possible patterns of review and consultation
- about criteria and mechanisms for reaching conclusions
- about document format, specific personnel assignments, and time and schedule.

## **PATTERNS OF REVIEW AND CONSULTATION**

In determining patterns of review and consultation, decisions will need to be made about how your particular procedure will work with:

- individual groups of students, faculty, and administrators
- curricular programs
- the theatre unit as a whole
- collaborating unit (shared programs, curricula, faculty, etc.)
- the institution as a whole
- constituencies and organizations beyond the institution

You will need to develop specific relationships among:

- the procedures for gathering ideas and information, and
- means for determining specific approaches to analysis, synthesis, feedback, and compilation of results.

You will also need to determine the extent to which groups, committees, and individuals will be involved at various stages and the timetables for their participation.

## Specific Choices for Self-Study Process and Document

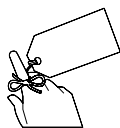
### REACHING CONCLUSIONS

To reach conclusions, you will need to determine both criteria and mechanisms. Your criteria will be guided in large part by the purposes and goals you have established for self-study. But you will also encounter the need to make decisions about relationships between fact and opinion – and the relative importance of each in particular areas, and the need to consider everything that you are finding and doing in terms of your own specific context. To develop mechanisms, decisions must be made about information and product flow as self-study and document writing proceed. You will also need to consider what constitutes consensus, especially when there is disagreement about the meanings of conclusions.

### SELF-STUDY DOCUMENT

Three major areas for decision-making are:

- purposes
- content
- outline/structure



#### REMEMBER

- There is an NAST purpose, and there are other purposes to be determined by the institution.
- With respect to content, it is necessary to determine
  - ◇ what is required by NAST
  - ◇ what is required to accomplish the additional institutional purposes
  - ◇ the relationship of both sets of requirements.
- What is required must be considered along with what is needed or what is desirable based on specific purposes and goals established for the entire self-study effort.
- Format decisions must produce a workable, effective relationship among all the proposed uses for the document.

When you begin to create an outline, a variety of resources are available to help you:

- the NAST Self-Study Outline

At present, NAST has three Self-Study Outlines: the Standard Format, the Portfolio Format, and the Strategic Analysis Format. These are available to review and download on the NAST Web site under “Membership Procedures,” specifically within the section titled “[Official NAST Procedures](#),” along with information to guide you in making a choice among the three outlines or to develop your own approach in consultation with NAST staff.

## **Specific Choices for Self-Study Process and Document**

- other NAST resources

The Association has many other resources that can help develop outlines for all or part of the self-study.

- ◇ Specific assessment documents dealing with undergraduate study, graduate study, and faculty roles and rewards.
- ◇ A futures sourcebook, and a set of summaries on major futures issues – economics; demographics; K-12 education; technology and technique; theatre values, traditions, means, and product; professional education and training, values and ideas; scholarship, research, and policy studies; administrative challenges. Each of these contains sets of questions, cautions, and leadership possibilities useful in the self-study context.
- ◇ Briefing papers on topics ranging from the health and safety for arts students, to interdisciplinarity, to advising.

- HEADS

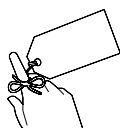
The Higher Education Arts Data Services or HEADS project contains a wealth of statistical data for comparison purposes. Special Reports using a set of institutions you specify are available. For details and contact information, please see <http://heads.arts-accredit.org>.

- materials already prepared or in process at the institution

Many institutions and units have materials already prepared that can become a part of the self-study document. NAST strongly encourages institutions to provide as appendices previously prepared documents that address self-study issues. It does not matter to NAST that such documents will have been prepared for other purposes or reviews.

- the possibility of a custom self-study

Indeed, if the principles presented in this document are followed, every self-study will be a custom self-study, heavily influenced by a specific set of aspirations, needs, styles, and methods. However, some self-studies are more customized than others. NAST has published provisions for working with institutions that wish to take creative, experimental, particularly focused approaches to self-study. These special needs indicate a small number of special requirements which are published in the NAST procedures. Individuals interested in such a self-study should contact the office of the Executive Director.

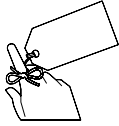


### **REMEMBER**

1. Since each self-study process and document is unique, each must be conceived and managed uniquely. Suggested formats and common practice are only starting points.
2. The administrative role in self-study is to lead those involved to create the process and the document that is right for your unit at the time of the self-study project.
3. A basic body of content is addressed in some way by all NAST-related self-studies, but process, content, and format vary.
4. It is absolutely essential to make clear priorities and to consider the ramifications of every choice, not only on the process and product, but on the way the project will be received and used in the future.
5. Both tangible and intangible resources must be considered when setting priorities and assigning personnel.
6. A document that is precise and readable, that fulfills the purposes and goals established for the self-study project, and that is clear for readers which will include the NAST visitors and the Commission is likely to serve many needs for a long time to come.

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## PART III: NAST STANDARDS, INSTITUTIONAL CONCLUSIONS



### REMEMBER

- The NAST standards come from the NAST membership. They are developed through comment and hearings processes involving the theatre community as a whole, and are ratified by membership vote. No other body in the Association or outside it can change the standards. The standards represent consensus about thresholds of acceptability for institutional membership.
- NAST standards emphasize functions rather than methods. *What* is more important than *how*.
- The standards are written to respect and encourage differences in approach by all types of institutions.

In considering standards and conclusions, we will focus on two areas:

- The concept of equations as applied to self-study projects,
- The self-study and specific NAST standards.

### EQUATIONS

The equation concept involves purposes, programs, and resources in a unique relationship for each institution. This concept can be applied to the total program, or to specific discrete elements of the total program. The main question always is how parts are relating to a particular whole. This is a relatively simple concept, but thinking about it in-depth means taking all theatre-unit related issues and evaluating the extent to which the parts and wholes relationship is working, not just in terms of an operational system, but in terms of aspirations for artistic and intellectual achievement. Primary questions are how well does our equation balance now, and how well is it expected to balance in the potential futures we envision? The same questions can be asked about specific wholes and parts relationships that function in discrete programs that are part of the unit.

In one sense, the NAST standards address parts and wholes. The subject areas of the standards – size and scope, faculty, library, and curricula, for example – represent elements of your equation. By using the subject areas of the standards to work with the concept of equations and the associated concept of wholes and parts, you will be able to determine how well various components of your operation contribute to such things as the development of student competencies; fulfillment of your purposes; systems for feedback and self-correction, and capabilities to address the evolving future.

## THE STANDARDS AND YOUR INSTITUTION

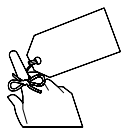
In general, NAST standards provide reference points and springboards, or perhaps a way of organizing thoughts about the issues central to the work of the theatre unit. While for NAST purposes, self-study should demonstrate a positive relationship between the work of the theatre unit and the standards, the self-study can go far beyond this basic accountability. NAST hopes that each self-study project will have such aspirations.

It is important to know which standards apply to your situation. This includes the NAST standards for purposes and operations and the standards regarding instructional programs.



### TAKE NOTE

Not every standard in the *Handbook* is applicable to every institution, nor is every standard applicable to every institution in the same way. For example, adequate financing for a comprehensive doctoral degree-granting theatre unit is quite different from the level of financing necessary for a program concerned only with the undergraduate liberal arts degree. Both institutions must meet threshold standards concerning finances, but the specific meaning of meeting this standard is quite different for each.



### REMEMBER

The standards are thresholds. They are not goals for ultimates in and of themselves, but they establish the conditions and foundations for reaching toward the ultimate. One way to define excellence is “seeking to become better each day.” In the terms of the NAST standards, this means seeking each day to move further beyond the threshold. A good self-study will place standards, thresholds, and aspirations for achievement together in ways that reveal how your theatre unit is achieving excellence, and how your theatre unit might continue to improve.



## WORKING WITH NAST STANDARDS

*To determine and use NAST standards applicable to your institution.*

### PROCEDURE

---

#### *Explanatory Notes:*

#### **Consider:**

1. Each standard (*see NAST Handbook sections for purposes and operations, theatre program components, curricula*), the functions it contains, and the applicability of those functions.
2. The area addressed by the standard and its connections and interdependencies with other areas.

What is the content of each standard, and what is the relationship of this content to effective education and training? Does all or part of this standard apply to us?

How do content and effective education issues associated with this standard relate to meeting other standards?

#### **Determine:**

3. Relationships and connections between current conditions and practices to the applicable standard.
4. The effectiveness of current results.

Do we meet the NAST standard or the portions that apply to us?

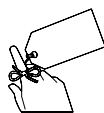
Are we meeting our own standards?

#### **Examine:**

5. Possible improvements under current conditions.
6. Possible futures issues.

What should we do next?

What *change factors* or *change mechanisms* can influence our current or projected results?



#### **REMEMBER**

To consider, determine, and examine the relationship of your program to NAST standards, you need not only information, but also analyses and conclusions. The self-study project, both process and document, should help you develop all three.

## NAST STANDARDS FOR PURPOSES AND OPERATIONS



### TAKE NOTE

The actual text of the standards is found in the *NAST Handbook*. The following text provides an overview of the issues often addressed in self-studies.

### Purposes – Institution and the Theatre Unit

This area is critical because purposes provide a foundation for all else. However formulated by the institution, purposes underlie educational and artistic decisions, long-range planning, operational choices. They provide the basis for evaluation both for the institution and for NAST. Self-study should involve:

- stating purposes (*see page 3 of this document and NAST Handbook, section II.A.2.a. for definitions of usual terms*)
- reviewing the extent to which they are clear, alive, foundational, realistic, synergistic, stable, sufficiently detailed to communicate effectively, guiding operations, informing change, and regularly evaluated.

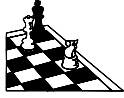
Reviewing each of these issues can lead to a variety of important considerations. For example, various purposes or statements formulated to function as goals, objectives, and action plans can be reviewed for their internal synergy with respect to the theatre unit, but also with respect to their synergy with the purposes of a parent institution.

### Size and Scope

How do size and scope fit with purposes? This is particularly important with respect to the number, level, and viability of curricular offerings. Size and scope also have a significant impact on instruction, a powerful influence on student and faculty interaction, and an obvious relationship to resources.

### Finances

Reviews of finances normally center on the match of financial resources to purposes, size, and scope. Are the finances adequate to meet thresholds and develop excellence in the range of activities, programs, and efforts being attempted? Another critical question involves prospects for future financial support.



## CAUTION

Over the years, the accreditation process has revealed two syndromes regarding finances. The first involves pronouncements that every issue of consequence can be solved if more funding is made available. The second declares that financial support is the only issue facing the unit. These two assertions are rarely, if ever, true.

While financial support is essential and cannot be diminished by any rhetoric or management theory, financial support will never be unlimited; therefore, wise decisions are always critical. Wise decision-making involves financial considerations, but always in light of larger questions about institutional creativity, purposes, content, and aspirations for achievement.

### **Governance and Administration**

Self-studies normally review issues of governance and administration in terms of their relationship to purposes, size, and scope. Does the system work effectively, is it capable and are various elements of it appropriately empowered? Are duties and reporting patterns clear? What about assignments of discretionary powers, or working room? Do governance and administration systems and personnel facilitate effective communication? Are governance policies and patterns clear and understood by all parties?

### **Faculty and Staff**

Faculty and staff resources are compared against the implications of applicable purposes, and are reviewed against the requirements of size and scope. Self-studies regularly consider the impact of forthcoming changes of personnel, available positions, and programmatic change. The NAST standards set threshold expectations for qualifications, number and distribution, appointment, evaluation, advancement, and loads. The standards also address student and faculty ratios, graduate teaching assistants, faculty development, and support staff. These standards are not expressed primarily in numerical terms, but rather in terms of appropriateness for specific operational conditions.

### **Facilities, Equipment, Health, and Safety**

Adequacy in terms of size and scope and relationship to purposes are principal concerns. Health and well-being, plans and timetables for maintenance, and technological commitments are all areas considered in-depth.

## **Library and Learning Resources, Information Services**

Comparisons are usually made between what exists or is projected and curricular offerings; purposes; size and scope; and to potential futures for information services. Major library areas addressed in the standards are governance, collections, personnel, services, facilities, and finances.

## **Recruitment, Admission, Retention, Advisement, and Record-Keeping**

These are reviewed for their integrity and effectiveness, for their relationship to purposes, size, and scope, and with respect to evolving conditions.

## **Published Materials and Web Sites**

These are considered for clarity and accuracy and for accessibility to those who need them.

## **Community Involvement**

This normally includes a review of goals and objectives and the effectiveness of such programs, including their relationship to the basic program.

## **Articulation with Other Schools**

This normally includes a review of goals and objectives and the effectiveness of articulation agreements with institutions, especially with regard to transfer of credit and curricular coordination.

## **Credit and Time Requirements**

Self-studies address these elements in different ways. For some, a policy review in this area is critical. For others, policies are set. Normally, these issues are discussed along with curricular issues.



### **MORE IDEAS**

Since all operational factors exist to support artistic, intellectual, and educational efforts, it is important to let purposes in terms of artistic, intellectual, and educational results drive operational considerations.

By doing this, the multiple influences on various positive or negative conditions can be revealed. For example, if undergraduate scholarship in theatre seems weak, is there a relationship to (a) library collections and policies, (b) the balance of faculty qualifications, (c) the level of expectations in curricular objectives statements, etc.?

## NAST STANDARDS FOR INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAMS



### TAKE NOTE

The actual text of the standards is found in the NAST *Handbook*. The following text provides an overview of the issues often addressed in self-studies.

### Three Critical Points

Having looked at operational issues in some detail, we now come to instructional programs. We begin with three critical points.

- The standards are expressed in terms of competencies and functions, not in terms of methods, techniques, or approaches. In other words, the standards address a common body of knowledge and skills rather than a common body of process or procedure.
- Under this philosophy, units are expected to create their own methods, approaches, and techniques. To use the now familiar golf analogy, the standards establish par; they do not require specific club, shoe, glove, ball, tee, towel, or umbrella choices or endorse the methods of any particular golf professional.
- Instructional programs are the heart of the self-study. This is only logical since providing instruction in theatre is the primary reason for the existence of a school. Beyond this obvious connection lies the fact that instructional programs contain the content and activities of the art form, and the content and activities associated with the art form. Thus, instructional programs contain the artistic, intellectual, conceptual, and operational center, as well as being closely associated with normal basic purposes.

## PLANNING INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAM REVIEWS

*To match instructional programs, NAST standards, and self-study purposes, goals, process, and document.*

### PROCEDURE

---

#### *Explanatory Notes:*

#### **Consider:**

1. Specific degrees and programs in all their unique variations.
2. The entire body of NAST standards applicable for your type of institution.

*For example:* All B.F.A., M.A., Ph.D. degrees.

*For example:* baccalaureate degree-granting, community/junior college, non-degree-granting, graduate degree-granting.

#### **Determine:**

3. NAST standards applicable by level.
4. NAST standards applicable by degree title or disciplinary content.
5. NAST standards applicable by specific degrees and programs.

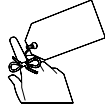
*For example:* Associate, baccalaureate, master's/non-M.F.A., M.F.A., doctoral.

*For example:* All B.A.s, B.F.A.s, etc.; the presence or not of analysis, history, performance, etc.

*For example:* B.A. in Theatre, B.F.A. in Design, M.A. in Theatre History, Ph.D. in Theatre Education, A.A. in Theatre, Certificate in Performance.

#### **Examine:**

6. Decisions regarding purposes and goals for your self-study.
7. Decision regarding the process and document to be used for your self-study.
8. The impact of 6. or 7. on how you will address the purposes, content, and results of programs in terms of:
  - NAST standards for instructional programs
  - The instructional program standards of the institution.



## REMEMBER

NAST standards represent thresholds. NAST's efforts in accreditation involve maintaining specific thresholds for specific levels and types of programs. However, the Association is equally concerned about assisting institutions to move as far as possible beyond those thresholds as possible for them, given the nature of theatre as an art form, and all the contexts, aspirations, and conditions that influence the work of each theatre unit. Thus, when we talk about comparing programs against standards, we are talking not only about NAST standards, but even more crucially, the standards of achievement that the institution and unit set for themselves. This latter type of review is extremely critical in making decisions about program viability in times of scarce resources.



## TAKE NOTE

### Interpreting Specific Terminology in NAST Standards

When reviewing the standards of the Association, it is important to understand the specific language that is used and how that language should be interpreted.

Criteria and provisions in the text of the *Handbook* are applied with careful attention to distinctions among standards, guidelines, recommendations, and other statements:

- A. Statements using terms such as *shall*, *must*, and *essential* outline threshold standards.
- B. Statements using the terms *normally* or *usually* provide guidelines that indicate one or more of the numerous conditions commonly present when there is compliance with a threshold standard.
- C. Statements using the terms *should*, *recommend*, or *suggest* indicate recommendations, which are actions consistent with standards compliance, but that are not in and of themselves threshold standards.
- D. Other statements provide comments, definitions, and statements of fact that indicate advice or shared knowledge based on consensus of the profession.

Accreditation is based on assurance that an institution meets the threshold standards agreed upon by the Association. Guidelines, recommendations, and other statements not using the terms *shall*, *must*, or *essential*, while related to fulfillment of functions required by the standards, are not themselves threshold standards.

## MAJOR CONTENT AREAS

For all liberal arts undergraduate degrees, the instructional standards address such issues as:

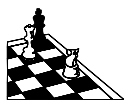
- theatre studies
- general studies
- residence

For all professional undergraduate degrees, the instructional standards address such issues as:

- performance
- repertory
- theoretical studies
- general academic studies
- curricular structure

For all graduate programs, the instructional standards address such issues as:

- studies in the major
- breadth of competence in theatre
- elective studies
- research tools – languages, statistics, etc.
- comprehensive synthesis
- professional preparation



### CAUTION

It is crucial to consider specific *Handbook* language on these and other questions current at the time of the self-study and accreditation review. The standards are continually being refined by action of the membership.

## COMMON QUESTIONS FOR ALL INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAMS

In meeting NAST standards, and in looking at aspirations and standards established by your institution, the following questions may be useful:

- What basic competencies are expected of graduates of the program?
- What required experiences or projects are expected?
- What opportunities are available for competency development and experiences beyond what is required?
- What achievement levels are expected?
- What achievement levels are being attained?
- Is the title of the program consistent with its content? Do fields designated as majors or emphases have sufficient presence in curricular distributions to justify their designations?
- Is sufficient time being required for tasks to be accomplished to ensure that the aspirations expressed in competencies, experiences, and opportunities are being fulfilled?
- How do students feel about their programs in terms of providing them with an education?
- How does each specific instructional program assess its own effectiveness, and how are assessments used to improve the program continuously?

These questions can be used alone or in conjunction with other comparative procedures such as the consider-determine-examine sequence that follows.



# REVIEWING INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAMS AGAINST STANDARDS

*To compare program results with institutional, theatre unit, and NAST expectations.*

## PROCEDURE

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### Consider:

1. The level or specific program to be reviewed.
2. Applicable NAST standards.
3. Applicable local goals and objectives.

### *Explanatory Notes:*

*For example:* All B.F.A. programs or the B.F.A. in Design/Technology.

Be sure to use a current NAST *Handbook*.

*For example:* unit standards, purposes, and goals for self-study, present aspirations, future aspirations.

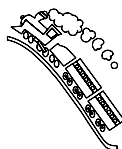
### Determine:

4. Relationships of conditions and practices to standards.
5. Results in terms of standards.
6. Results in terms of goals and objectives.

Consider unit and institutional standards as well as NAST standards.

### Examine:

7. Strengths, areas for improvement
8. Viability in relationship to instructional and operational priorities.
9. Next steps to make wise decisions – reviews of contextual stability, plans, actions, need for further reviews, etc.



**KEEP GOING**

After completing this sequence, you should have an excellent idea of how each instructional program is functioning. With such information about each program, it is possible to begin gaining a composite picture of the work of the unit that can be placed in relationships with appropriate sets of goals and objectives, operational conditions, and purposes for the self-study. You then begin to have the various sets of information and analyses that can create a sense of how your institution's equation is balancing.

## NEW PROGRAMS

At times, institutions establish new programs immediately preceding or during the period of self-study. The NAST Self-Study format makes it easy to seek Plan Approval for these programs in the context of the self-study. Essentially, the self-study asks that information regarding new programs address such issues as:

- purposes,
- curriculum,
- resources, and
- fit with existing programs.

Plan Approval should be sought for new programs prior to the matriculation of students.



### MORE IDEAS

The *Sourcebook for Futures Planning* has several “tests” that can assist with analysis concerning new curricula:

- **The Priorities Test** (*SB, p. 57*)  
helps the theatre unit determine how its overall current priorities may have an impact on a proposed change in policies, programs, or activities.
- **The Program Mix Test** (*SB, p. 58*)  
assesses the relative balance/emphasis of an institution's curricular offerings and related activities as affected by a current or prospective program.
- **The Goals/Objectives and Action Plans Correlation Test** (*SB, p. 59*)  
helps determine the extent to which a given operating policy or action plan actually supports the achievement of the theatre unit's goals and objectives.

*Sourcebook Supplement I* (page 17) has a consider-determine-examine sequence that helps ascertain the viability of a proposed curricular program.

## Performance Programs

The NAST Self-Study format also asks institutions to evaluate their performance program. Since performance is an activity that relates to all institutions and programs in theatre, self-studies normally assess performance activities, analyze relationships to applicable purposes, develop a summary statement regarding results, and explore next steps.



### TAKE NOTE

A significant number of theatre activities involve the acquisition of fundamental competencies that are developed throughout the life of the theatre professional through constant use and expansion. In this conceptual framework, quality and excellence are always being redefined as individuals and groups continually reach higher levels of achievement. Everyone understands that various elements of instructional programs, no matter how well conceived, cannot substitute for capability and capacity, for will and perseverance, or for the opportunities and circumstances that develop individual careers. Therefore, in addressing the standards, it is more important to place issues of excellence and quality in the context of specific functions, such as the development of competencies, than it is to assume that the establishment of specific standards and requirements will ensure excellence. In other words, excellence in terms set for students graduating from a specific instructional program at a specific level may be appropriate and successful in terms of specific work at a specific level without necessarily translating into other, perhaps broader, concepts of excellence that obtain in the field as a whole.

**For this reason, NAST urges those in the midst of self-study to look at their instructional programs not only in terms of what they produce at graduation, but for the foundations they establish for lifelong artistic and intellectual maturity.**

## EVALUATION, PLANNING, AND PROJECTIONS

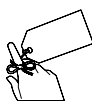
Here self-study writers present conclusions and approaches used to reach conclusions. Here the institution's ability to deal with the parts and wholes relationship is most clearly revealed – the concluding section of the self-study usually shows the extent to which the theatre unit has understood itself.

- “Evaluations” involve any and all analyses of current effectiveness.
- “Planning” indicates systematic approaches to the future.
- “Projections” involve creating an understanding of potential contexts and conditions as a basis for wise decision-making.



### TAKE NOTE

Evaluation, planning, and making projections are interdependent.



### REMEMBER

It is essential to evaluate, plan, and make projections in light of purposes, size, and scope. This is true whether you expect or hope for changes in purposes, size, or scope, or whether you expect any or all of these to remain essentially the same over the present and future time period encompassed by your study.



### CAUTION

Develop and use your own techniques, procedures, time requirements, and specific methods for evaluation, planning, and projections. Do not become driven by processes that do not fit your situation.

In beginning to work with evaluation, planning, and projections, there are several decisions that need to be made.

- What are the relationships among the three necessary to address issues and reach conclusions in your specific unit? One of the most critical questions here is the relationship in your programs of evaluation to planning.
- What scope, breadth, degree of formality, the extent of system will you bring to any of these three efforts?
- What relationships among concepts, operations, and policy-making are in place or projected?



## REMEMBER

There are no standard answers, even for similar sizes and types of institutions. Each institution and unit will have a specific set of answers on these issues based on specific conditions. For example, among all institutions that grant the liberal arts degree, there would be vast differences in the degree of systematic effort on projections. An institution that has just completed a successful five-year program to increase enrollment would make decisions on this issue from a different base than an institution that had just suffered a precipitous enrollment decline. In working on the issue of projections, the two institutions might come up with similar approaches, or they might be radically different. The issue in this example is attending to the question of projection rather than arriving at a standard answer with respect to breadth, depth, degree of formality, or system.



## MORE IDEAS

Here are some additional questions that are normally addressed in the evaluation, planning, and projections part of the self-study. These are only examples.

- How effective are evaluations of student work in telling us what we want to know about how we are doing?
- In what terms are we evaluating, planning, and projecting?
- To what extent are we looking at resources, artistic product, intellectual product, student competencies, faculty achievements, service? To what extent are we evaluating, planning, and projecting only in terms of the resource called funding?

Another critical question has to do with changes foreseen with respect to purposes, to operations, and to instructional programs as they affect the equation that operates within the institution and the synergies necessary for that equation to balance. For example:

- What are your priorities, both long-term and short-term? How would you like for issues, concerns, and conditions to evolve?
- What are the most critical issues influencing future effectiveness? What are the two or three things that we need to be most concerned about at the moment? What are the most critical things we need to be concerned about over the next two years? How congruent are these three lists and what does that mean for decisions to be made in all our areas of responsibility?

It is hoped that the self-study process you create will help you to reach these kinds of summary conclusions for the ultimate benefit of your program.

## **PART IV**

### **PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER AT YOUR INSTITUTION**

We have now laid out just about all the tools in our tool kit. But now that we have introduced the tools, let us go back to the issue of using them to create a self-study process and document at your institution that meets your needs and serves your unit for years to come.

#### **AN OVERVIEW IN TEXT**

To review for just a moment, we have talked about purposes and goals for self-study. We have talked about the self-study process and the self-study document. We have talked about the standards used to measure results of the self-study process, and we have talked about conclusions. In working with these six basic elements—purposes, goals, process, document, standards, conclusions—and all the decisions that can be made about them, we suggest you begin by considering the possibilities and then consider what are the desirabilities. Follow this by considering the necessities and the givens for your situation.

When you have all of this information, you have the basis for determining the specifics of what you will do with each of these elements and how they will fit together. You will be able to work with the issue of priorities. You will be able to review and make decisions about issues of resources, both tangible and intangible.

Once you have done all of this, you will be able to look at the synergies your plans are expected to create among these six elements. You will be able to look at specific parts of your self-study approach with respect to priorities and resources. You will be in a position to review the ramifications of the process you envision in terms of its impact on everything from morale to relationships with other units and administrators. You will also be able to examine the potential ramifications of the kind of document that you intend to produce, the ramifications in a variety of areas such as impact on decision-making in the unit, understanding of the program by those in the institution and beyond to whom you must be accountable, suitability for orienting appropriate individuals to the work and aspirations of the unit.

Having gathered all these pieces of information and all these ideas, and having developed a specific approach, management requirements will begin to become clear. You will know in some detail what you or whoever you delegate to oversee and administer the self-study effort will need to do.

## AN OVERVIEW IN CHART FORM

### Six Elements

- Purposes for self-study
- Goals for self-study
- Self-study process
- Self-study document
- Standards
- Conclusions

### Regarding the Six Elements and Their Multiple Relationships

#### *Consider*

Possibilities  
Desirabilities  
Necessities and Givens

#### *Determine*

Specifics  
Priorities  
Resources—Tangible, Intangible

#### *Examine*

Synergies  
Ramifications  
Management and Personnel Requirements



### **REMEMBER**

Laid out this way, the self-study project can appear to be all-consuming. Indeed, there are certain specific types of self-studies and certain sets of aspirations for self-study that could essentially occupy everyone's full-time attention for a year or more. Almost no institution or unit is in a position to work in this way. This obvious limitation points toward the wisdom of laying out all the issues and tools and constructing a reasonable approach for your specific situation. The self-study project is an artistic project involving compilation and composition. You and your colleagues are the artists.



## MORE IDEAS

A useful technique is to take one area at a time and study it against all other areas. Here are a few examples:

- Institution A has determined that it has two specific purposes for its self-study. One is to renew membership in NAST, and another is to prepare for an internal review mandated by the institution. Looking at these two purposes, the institution asks questions regarding their meaning for and impact on all other purposes and goals for self-study, on the process chosen, on the document to be written, on particular use of Association and institutional standards, and on approaches to reaching conclusions through evaluation, planning, and projections.
- Institution B wishes to take a specific NAST standard and let it cut across every element of the self-study. This institution is concerned about development of analytical skills for undergraduates. What does this decision about self-study mean for and what is its impact on purposes, goals, process, document, other standards, and conclusions.
- Institution C wishes to make sure that all graduates have an in-depth experience and knowledge of American theatre, and so they take this particular issue and study its meaning for and its impact on purposes for the self-study, other goals, the process, the document, standards, and conclusions.
- Institution D decides to deal with a specific projected reality: four of eight major faculty will retire in the next five years. This issue of faculty retirements has specific meaning for and impact on self-study decisions about purposes, goals, process, document, use of standards, and types of conclusions.

It is possible to start with any element or issue and let that govern or influence other decisions about the self-study itself and about the evaluative results of the self-study and their impact on future decisions.

## EQUATIONS, AGAIN

Let us go back once again to the equation concept where we are trying to build an optimum relationship among parts and wholes in specific situations. In these terms, the success of any self-study effort involves creating a specific equation for your self-study that in turn illuminates the equation present in the unit as it is now and as you and your colleagues want it to be. This particular perspective reveals once again that only you can make the best self-study equation for your institution.



## ADVICE FOR EQUATION DEVELOPERS

As you work to create your self-study equation, here are several short background concepts that may be helpful.

- Use NAST standards and your standards as baselines and springboards for excellence and innovation.
- Remember Peter Drucker's statements that “long-range planning is necessary because we cannot forecast accurately” and that “planning is not just about future decisions, but about the futurity of present decisions.”
- Planning to do the self-study, or planning to use the self-study in other developmental efforts means decisions about the right risks. It means looking closely at values underlying applicable purposes statements held by individuals involved. It also means looking at those values that the self-study may confirm or challenge.
- With regard to confirming and challenging, it is important to look closely at the question of what can and cannot be traded, and under what circumstances. What values and conditions are critical to the success of your unit?
- As a manager of self-study, it is important to help those involved to maintain credible balance between ideas and information. Decisions about documentation of both ideas and information help set specific goals for the self-study project and address issues of accountability to those outside the unit.
- It is also useful to help everyone involved remember there is usually a point where more or less information will not matter to a specific decision. Information gathering and analysis are not a substitute for each other.
- It is also good to get a concept of what changes and what does not. This applies both to specific levels where change may occur such as the actions of a board of trustees versus decisions about lesson plans for an advanced drama course. What changes and what does not also applies to patterns of change, policy making mechanisms, the specific arrangements of change forces, and the specific influences of various change factors on the specific work of your unit.
- What changes and what does not also refers to terminology, meanings, and sets of values. Another way of phrasing this question is what is changing and what is not. Another version is what appears to be changing and what is really changing. All of these questions are extremely important for those concerned about orienting the self-study heavily in favor of futures analysis.
- There is also the question of common and specific futures. Every unit will work under a set of general conditions shared by all the units. These conditions will be the subject of analysis and punditry. However, analysis and punditry about general conditions cannot substitute for an analysis of the unique conditions present in a specific situation. For example, although demographic changes in the United States affect everyone, demographic conditions in southern California are different than those in central Iowa. A distinction between common and specific futures is important to creating conditions for successful analysis. One thing to remember here is that Chicken Little is almost always wrong.

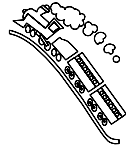
- As you develop a working strategy for the self-study project, you will need to make decisions about the balance you will strike between technical and artistic approaches. Will you simply follow the detailed set of questions provided by the NAST procedures document, or to what extent will you use this and other resources to create your own set of questions and issues? In making these decisions, you will also determine when you will work sequentially and when you will work in a cumulative fashion. The mixture and balance of sequential and cumulative organization will do much to define the kind of interaction among participants the self-study project will produce.



## REMEMBER

It is important to help all involved remain clear about the following:

- The self-study is neither end nor beginning. It is both. By definition, self-study means stopping and looking at the situation, but it also means setting the stage for work that is to come. It involves assessing the lay of the land, but also what kinds of attention will be paid to the land as a whole and to various parcels. Along this same line, self-study is neither the end nor the beginning of the accreditation process. While the self-study project is the most critical aspect of accreditation, it facilitates the work of the on-site visitors, serves as a fundamental document from which the visitors develop their written report. Then the self-study and the visitors' report become the basis for the institution's optional response to the visitors' report. All three of these documents go to the Commission, which gives careful and detailed attention to each, beginning with the self-study. Given this sequence, it is important to remember that the self-study is not the institution's final word to the Commission.
- Management time spent early on developing purposes and goals and relating these to process and document, and then relating all to the issue of standards and conclusions will save significant time and minimize difficulties. Individuals and groups working on parts of the self-study need to have a good sense of how they are contributing to the whole. There are an infinite number of patterns that can work, and probably more than a few that could work to maximum effectiveness at your institution, but contributors to the self-study project need to know what the pattern is. Otherwise, they can waste a tremendous amount of time exploring a particular aspect of the situation with no positive benefits, at least in the self-study project. We are not suggesting here that every detail and finding be projected in advance; what we are suggesting is a clear understanding about major purposes and goals. What we are suggesting is a simple framework that reduces the possibilities to an appropriate and manageable number. This, too, is standard artistic practice.
- The NAST National Office has many types of formats and questions that you can use as is, or as springboards for your own variations or new ideas. As you work on the self-study project, you do not have to reinvent the wheel or create the whole effort from scratch unless, of course, you want to. We suggest that you familiarize yourself with NAST resources by simply reading through them. With a knowledge of the tools and materials others have found useful, you are in a good position to build your own structure.
- The purpose of the effort is for institutions and programs to get better at what they do, not to pass a test. The self-study is more of a master class than a performance or exhibition.



## **KEEP GOING**

Your self-study is important both to you and to NAST, to the future of higher education in theatre and, by extension, to the future of theatre itself. The self-study project is intended to help each institution consider all the connections, both internal and external, that join it to the larger world of art and intellect. NAST hopes that you and your colleagues and all constituents involved in the self-study will see the project in terms of these large functions. We also believe that, done appropriately, the self-study can have a long-term positive impact. Those who have worked closely with NAST accreditation over the years have seen this result over and over again. We are sure that you and your colleagues will produce an effort that joins this distinguished tradition of commitment and achievement.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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The principal author of *Sourcebook Supplement IV* was Samuel Hope. Harold Best served as principal editor.

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