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Historical Preface

Edward F. Trombley III
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The *Self Audit Manual for Registrars* was first published by the Kentucky Association of the Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers (KACRAO) in 1974. In 1975 the *Manual* was revised and in 1979 it was extensively reworked by KACRAO under the sponsorship of an AACRAO Task Force. In 1986, the AACRAO Executive Committee requested an update to the *Manual*, which was assigned to the Registration Techniques Committee. The revised edition, entitled *Professional Development Guidelines for Registrars: A Self-Audit*, was published in 1987.

In 2000, an AACRAO volunteer committee brought the *Self-Audit* into the new millennium. Updates were made in the areas of technology, legal issues, graduation, and commencement. Appendices were added to allow expansion of select topics, and to provide users with additional resources outside the scope of chapter discussions.

In 2012 the re-christened *A Self-Assessment* was published, reflecting a positive take on self-reflection and continuous quality im-

provement. That edition explored utilization of emerging technology to improve office operations, societal factors to consider when reviewing practices, regulatory updates, legal issues, and comprehensive planning for the identification—and subsequent remediation—of deficiencies.

Five years later, at the 2017 AACRAO Annual Meeting in Minneapolis, MN, a committee of authors, including some who had collaborated on the 2012 publication, met with the AACRAO staff to discuss an update to the *Self-Assessment*. The ever-briefer periods elapsing between editions reflects the increasing tempo of change in the world of educational technology and its impact on the profession. This is hardly surprising when one considers, for example, that in a single generation of registrars, student record management has transitioned from fireproof cabinets filled with paper files and microfiche to virtual records maintained in the cloud.

In response to this changing landscape, the 2017 *Self-Assessment* committee has re-

grouped and reapportioned several topics, dividing the registrar's role and management of the office into separate chapters, and combining lesser elements of multiple previous chapters into a comprehensive look at compliance, certifications, and legal issues. Additionally, entirely new chapters on emerging issues and professional development have been added. All chapters have been reconsidered and revised—in some cases rewritten almost entirely—to reflect the timeliest content and the latest developments in the field.

The purpose of *AACRAO's Professional Development Guidelines for Registrars: A Self-Assessment* is to support the implementation of best practices in the Office of the Registrar, based upon a consensus of those best practices from working professionals in the field.

The *Self-Assessment* serves as a practical guide with which registrars can take a step back to candidly survey their own offices and staff members; consider factors impacting compliance, customer service, and current practice; and weigh options to formulate action plans and implement procedural improvements based upon their assessments. The committee for this edition hopes that the diversity of background and experience that they bring to the *Self-Assessment* has resulted in content that will prove practical and useful for professionals working in any student information system, under any accreditation organization, at any experience level from beginner to seasoned registrar, and at any institution type—public or private, large or small.

Introduction

Julie Ferguson
University Registrar, University of Scranton

Congratulations! By obtaining a copy of *AACRAO's Professional Development Guidelines for Registrars: A Self Assessment*, you have committed to using assessment, continuous quality improvement, and data-driven decision making in order to advance the operations of your office.

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 to cover a broad range of topics and functions. It is formatted as a book of questions designed to prompt data collection and analysis. After responses are gathered and organized, you are encouraged to evaluate and reflect on your answers. The results of your evaluation of policies and procedures may affirm current practices or prompt additional action. In sum, the design mimics the approach a consultant would use if hired to evaluate the operations of a registrar's office, in a cost-effective and easy-to-use format.

The *Assessment* is an ideal training handbook for new professionals, as it provides a comprehensive overview of the registrar's role and responsibilities, beginning with a series of well-established and generally accepted standards. Seasoned professionals may use the *Assessment* to inspire others and revitalize routines. In fact, 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. A suggested workshop format, including timeline and helpful instructions, can be found in Appendix A.

Coupled with AACRAO's Professional Competencies and Proficiencies and other publications, the *Assessment* is a valuable resource in a registrar's toolkit!¹

¹ See <www.aacrao.org/resources/professional-competencies> and <bookstore.aacrao.org>.

Format

The *Assessment* is arranged by topical area with chapters addressing most basic registrar functions. Within each chapter are Guiding 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.