ASSESSING STUDENT LEARNING:
A RESOURCE GUIDE FOR STUDENT AFFAIRS AT USD

Purpose:
The purpose of this guide is to assist Student Affairs units in creating a shared process of assessing student learning and building on the many ways we are already doing this work. It will assist units in identifying their functional areas, developing associated learning and operational goals and outcomes, articulating related strategies and mapping them to the broader learning outcomes for the division. It will also assist units in developing a 3-year unit assessment plan. Through this effort we will more clearly express the many ways we support and enhance student learning and contribute to the University mission.

This Resource Guide is designed to help each unit in Student Affairs develop a common framework for assessment in the division. The Guide is comprised of 7 sections or steps to help you:

1. Define the functional areas of your unit
2. Develop learning/operational goals for each functional area
3. Map unit goals to the Undergraduate/Graduate Learning Goals & SA Mission
4. Develop learning/operational outcomes for each goal
5. Articulate and map strategies to outcomes
6. Determine assessment methods for learning/operational outcomes
7. Develop a 3-year assessment plan

Each step includes detailed descriptions and resources to help you work through the process. A glossary is included to ensure we are all using the same definitions of assessment terms and a list of resources and other references expands the basic information included in the guide.

As you begin the process and any time throughout, please know that I am a resource to you. Some ways that I may be able to be helpful:

- Meet with the unit to explain the process and develop a timeline for working through the process
- Facilitate a meeting to work on any of the steps
- Provide feedback on developing assessment measures
- Help you interpret data
- Provide additional resources such as articles, books, websites, etc.

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Guiding Principles

As we begin this work, it is important to clarify some underlying assumptions about assessment in Student Affairs. First,

Students learn outside the classroom and Student Affairs staff are educators

Our core values articulate, "[USD] is committed to the dignity and fullest development of the whole person". This underscores the fact that students are learning all the time and as Student Affairs professionals, we are responsible for nurturing that learning in intentional ways. Second,

It's all about the students and what they are learning

Assessment can have negative connotation for many reasons. At its best, it helps us to keep our eye on the ball – our students and what they are learning through their experience with our programs and services. Being learning-centered allows us to shed our skepticism, subtext and ties to strategies that may or may not be in the best interest of our students. It broadens the concept of accountability away from "performance" toward student learning. Finally,

Assessment is an investment

Assessment takes time and effort just like any good investment. If we can view it in this way, that the time and effort we invest in this process will lead to deeper learning for our students, we can justify that time and effort in support of our mission.

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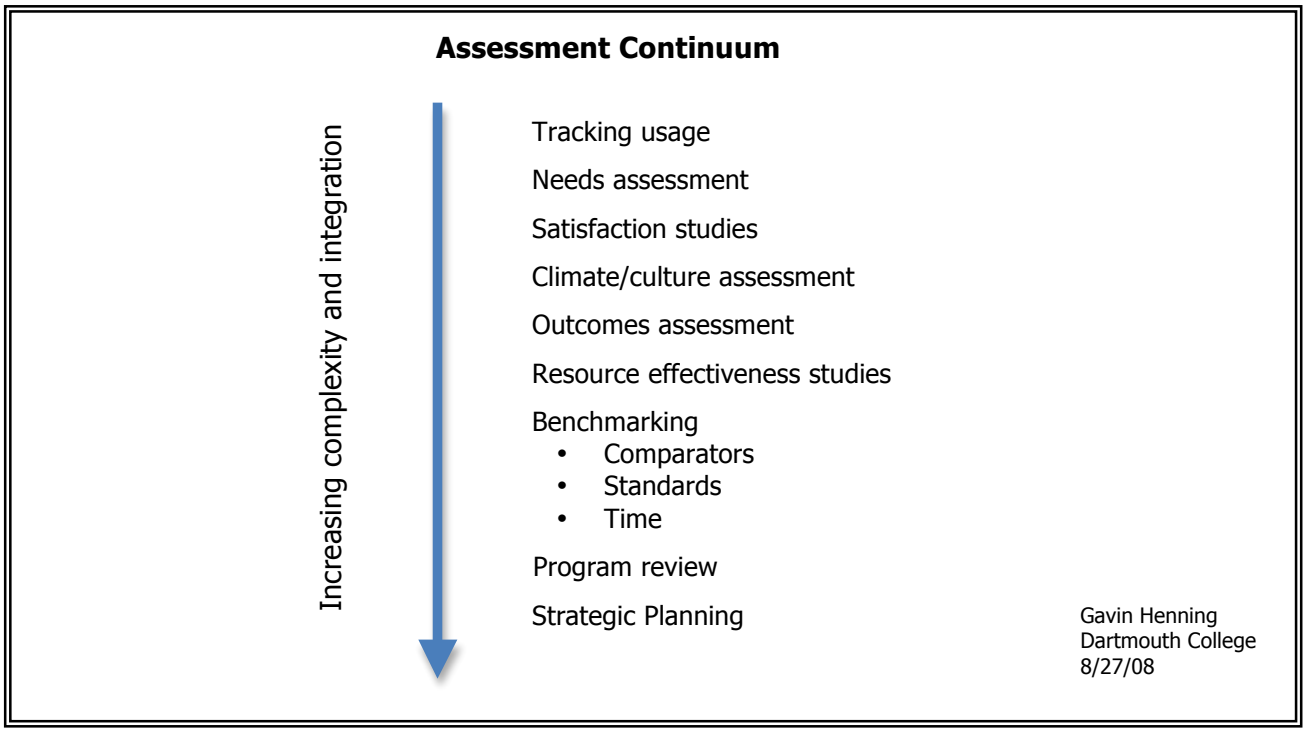
Assessment Framework

Definition of Assessment:
"Assessment is any effort to gather, analyze, and interpret evidence which describes institutional, departmental, divisional, or agency effectiveness." (Upcraft & Schuh, 1996)

This definition of assessment captures a broad perspective. There are many types of assessment that together present the whole picture of what students are learning along with the effectiveness of our programs and services. Types of assessment include tracking usage, needs assessment, satisfaction, climate/culture assessment, outcomes assessment, resource effectiveness studies, benchmarking, program review, strategic planning. While these different types vary in the level of complexity and integration it is important to understand what each type can tell us and decipher which type is appropriate to use in differing situations. The Assessment Continuum below along with the definitions of the types of assessment demonstrate this.

While there are many types of assessment, we will mainly focus on outcomes assessment for the purpose of this document and our work within the division. The following definition of outcomes assessment captures the ideals of assessment where the express intent is to improve our programs and services for the sole purpose of enhancing student learning.

A Definition of Outcomes Assessment
- "the ongoing process of establishing clear, measurable expected outcomes of student learning;
- ensuring that students have sufficient opportunities to achieve those outcomes;
- systematically gathering, analyzing, and interpreting evidence to determine how well student learning matches our expectations;
- using the resulting information to understand and improve student learning." (Suskie, 2004)



Types of Assessment Defined:

Tracking usage:	This is keeping track of programs, projects, students served. Examples include tracking the number of students going through a dining hall at a particular point in time or tracking how many social programs are done in the halls in a semester.
Needs assessment:	This is trying to understand what needs are. Examples include determining the social support needs students of color may have on a predominantly white campus or understanding the academic support first generation college students require.
Satisfaction studies:	These are studies that simply seek to measure satisfaction. Examples include understanding how satisfied students are with their residence hall or how satisfied parents were with parents' orientation.
Climate/culture assessment:	These are assessments done to understand the culture and its impact. Examples include understanding the impact on a campus for women who have limited space to meet or the impact on a campus of the installation of gender-neutral housing options.
Outcomes assessment:	This is the assessment of some type of intended outcome. Oftentimes the outcome is a learning or development outcome, but it can also be a program outcome. Examples include evaluating leadership skills acquired by a leadership course or alcohol use after a new alcohol policy on campus has been implemented.
Resource effectiveness studies:	These are studies that assess resources used for a variety of programs and services. Examples include reviewing the student fees budget for campus concerts or understanding if there is enough usage of the library at early morning hours to keep it open.
Benchmarking:	These are studies that regard comparisons such as comparisons to other institutions, professional standards, or the institution itself over time. Examples include the Educational Benchmarking Institute study of Residence Life or comparison of the number of student activities staff per students for institutions of comparable size or review of career services using the National Association of Colleges and Employers standards.
Program review:	This is a review of an entire unit, not just a one-time program. Examples include a comprehensive review of a residential life office or review of a women's center. It will likely utilize many of the assessment types above.
Strategic planning:	These include opportunities to assess the current state of affairs and determine strategic priorities for the near future. Examples include determine 5 priorities for the next 3-4 years.

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STEP ONE – Define Functional Areas of the Unit

Functional areas are the distinct functions that the unit engages in to provide services and learning opportunities for students. By articulating these functional areas, units can be clear about the various ways they serve and engage students and examine any gaps or overlaps in their overall unit and among other units within Student Affairs. Each unit should articulate the unique functional areas of the unit along with 1-2 bullets describing the main purpose of each area.

Example: Assistant Dean of Students Unit

The functional areas of the Assistant Dean of Students Unit are:

1. Student Conduct
    a. Articulates the Rules of Conduct
    b. Defines and carries out disciplinary processes
2. New Student Orientation
    a. Plans and carries out Torero Days
    b. Plans and carries out spring semester new student orientation
3. Student Newspaper
    a. Oversees all matters related to the operation of *The Vista*
4. Graduate Student Life
    a. Advises the Graduate Student Council
    b. Attends to matters of importance for graduate students
5. Customer Service
    a. Courteous and prompt response to telephone and email inquiries and walk-in traffic

Tip: Each functional area should be distinct. If you find overlap among the functional areas you've defined, you may need to go back and revise.

STEP TWO – Develop Learning/Operational Goals For Each Functional Area

Each functional area should have a few broad learning or operational goals that describe the general outcomes you expect as a result of students engaging in programs or services in that functional area. **Tip:** It may be helpful to begin with Step Four to develop the specific learning or operational outcomes and then derive the key broader goals that capture all of the specific outcomes. Each functional area should have no more than 5 goals.

Learning Goals are defined as the broad goals that articulate the general student learning you intend through their engagement with your programs or services.

> ***Example:*** *One of the broad learning goals for Torero Days is that students will be familiar with the mission and core values of the University of San Diego.*

Operational Goals are defined as the broad goals that articulate the general outcomes you intend through their engagement with your services.

> ***Example:*** *One of the broad operational goals for Outdoor Adventures could be that participants/customers will receive quality customer service.*

STEP THREE – Map Goals to Undergraduate Learning Goals and Outcomes & SA Mission

As we develop learning and operational goals at the unit level, it is important that they link to divisional and institutional goals so that we can understand how we contribute to student learning overall. As a division, we will use the Student Affairs Assessment Planning Matrix on page 8 to do this. The USD Undergraduate Learning Goals and Outcomes as well as the Student Affairs Mission will serve as our overarching structure to organize Student Affairs learning outcomes.

USD Undergraduate Learning Goals and Outcomes

Goal 1: Develop Knowledge about the Liberal Arts and Sciences:

Identify and explain major vocabularies and conceptual, theoretical and methodological foundations of sciences, social sciences, humanities and the arts. Students engage contemporary and enduring questions from these disciplines. (Outcome 1: knowledge)

Goal 2: Acquire and Apply Intellectual Skills:

Think abstractly and creatively, problem-solve, develop the ability to locate information, and to critically analyze this information. (Outcome 2: information literacy, Outcome 3: creative thinking, Outcome 4: critical thinking)

Demonstrate and apply analytical reasoning, and comprehend the application of mathematics, logic, and technology to other disciplines and areas of human endeavor (Outcome 5: analytic reasoning; Outcome 6: quantitative competency)

Develop the capacity to express oneself and interact with diverse others through writing, speaking, and using a second language (Outcome 7: communication)

Goal 3: Cultivate Personal and Social Responsibility:

Reflect on ethical issues across the curriculum as guides for personal development and responsible action. (Outcome 8: ethical judgment and conduct).

Explore the complex issues of both local and global cultures. Cultivate understanding of, and respect for, cultural diversity and religious traditions. Analyze one's own background and perspectives within these contexts. (Outcome 9: cultural awareness and competence; Outcome 10: engagement)

Recognize the centrality of environmental sustainability. Develop an awareness of the intertwined nature (intertwined relationships/ interrelationship) of personal actions, social justice, and economic development, and their long-term implications for the environment. (Outcome 11: environmental awareness)

Goal 4: Integrate Patterns of Learning

Develop the ability to synthesize disparate areas of knowledge and courses of study through individual and collaborative learning. For example, integrate knowledge and skills through team-taught courses, capstone projects, performances, or interdisciplinary seminars as potential formats. (Outcome 12: synthesis of core curriculum outcomes)

Adapted from "Essential Learning Outcomes," Liberal Education and America's Promise (LEAP)Campaign, American Association of Colleges and Universities at: http://www.aacu.org/leap/vision.cfm, and many other lists of student learning outcomes from a wide variety of institutions.

The 3 main components of the Student Affairs Mission Statement are:

1. Motivates and inspires student learning and personal development,
2. Serves the University community,
3. Challenges students to make a positive contribution to society.

The first and third components of the Student Affairs mission broadly describe the more specific types of learning, personal development and contributions defined by the Undergraduate Learning Goals and Outcomes. These two components are not included in the following matrix for that reason. The second component describes the services we offer students, focusing on our operational outcomes, and is included making thirteen different categories to which we can link all of our unit goals and outcomes.

The next step in the process is to map the learning and operational goals to the Undergraduate Learning Goals and Outcomes and SA Mission. This step helps to align the intended learning to the divisional learning outcomes and mission.

Below is the format we will use to map unit goals to divisional learning outcomes and mission. An electronic copy of the Student Affairs Assessment Planning Matrix Excel spreadsheet can be found on the student affairs website: http://www.sandiego.edu/sa/assess .

Student Affairs Assessment Planning Matrix										
Functional Areas	**Learning/ Operational Goals (Students will...)**	**Link to ULG/SA Mission (Primary)**	**Link to ULG/SA Mission (Secondary)**	**Learning/ Operational Outcomes**	**Assessment Summary**	**Type of Assessment**	**Methodology**	**Timing**	**Summary of Findings**	**Planned Changes Based on Findings**
FA2: Torero Days	LG1.1 Be familiar with the University's Mission and Core Values	service to the university community		Link to Torero Days Outcomes	outcomes assessment survey administered to freshman class in October; satisfaction survey administered to freshman class during the final session of Torero Days; training program and Torero Days evaluation of student leaders (T-Board, T-Squad, PAs)	outcomes assessment, participant satisfaction, training and program evaluation of student leaders	survey, evaluation and focus group	Fall 2009	generally, students were able to recognize the mission, core values and components of core value of community	identify targets; review expectations for speakers and PA meeting
	LG1.2 Transition academically and personally to campus life at USD and the city of San Diego	synthesis							nearly all students were able to describe the role of the preceptor; list one resource to assist with academic or wellness concerns and confident navigating the campus; students report using 'MySanDiego' as primary method of accessing various needs; fewer students were able to identify the value and ways to get involved on campus and acknowledge that their behavior has an impact on others and the community	replace 'Discover San Diego' with 'Getting Involved' session; revisit strategies for delivering messages around impact of behavior on others
	LG1.3 Establish meaningful relationships with members of the University community	synthesis							nearly all students were able to identify their RA/role, fewer students were able to identify PA; most students were aware of resident ministers as a resource, fewer were aware of resident faculty and community director; most students report meeting at least 16 new people during Torero Days and most maintain contact with at least 6	develop strategies to develop sustained contact with PA, make resident students more aware of community director as resource
	LG1.4 Feel University of San Diego community pride	service to the university community							nearly all students identified at least one way they demonstrate USD pride	develop strategies to help students learn more ways to demonstrate pride

The following is a description of each column utilizing an example of a functional area from the Assistant Dean of Students Unit. The column descriptions will continue through each step.

Functional Area: List the distinct functions of your unit. Please label each function FA1, FA2 and so on. Please use a new cell for each functional area.

Example: *Torero Days*

Learning/Operational Goals: Please list the learning/operational goals associated with each functional area and ensure that they are aligned. Please label each learning goal LG1.1, LG1.2 and so on for FA1. For FA2 label LG2.1, LG2.2 and so on with the first number mirroring that of the associated functional area. For operational goals please label them OG1.1 and so on. Please use a new cell for each goal.

Example: *Students will be familiar with the University's Mission and Core Values.*

Link to ULG/GLG/SA Mission: Each learning/operational goal should link to one of the Undergraduate Learning Goals and Outcomes and/or the Student Affairs Mission. Please select the description from the list to which your goal links most closely. The next column allows a secondary selection, please select the top 2 if your outcome links to multiple aspects of the Undergraduate Learning Goals and Outcomes and/or Student Affairs Mission.

Example: *The primary link is "service to the university community", one of the components of the Student Affairs mission. The Torero Days program serves the university community by acclimating first year students into the community on various dimensions, including knowledge of the university mission and core values.*

Note that the Assessment Summary, Types of Assessment, Methodology, Timing, Summary of Findings, Planned Changes Based on Findings columns will be completed by the Associate Dean of Students.

STEP FOUR – Develop Learning/Operational Outcomes for Each Goal

What is an outcome?

An **outcome** is "the desired effect of a program, service, or intervention but is more specific than a goal. It is participant focused." (Henning, 2007).

Each learning/operational goal will have several associated learning and/or operational outcomes. Learning/operational outcomes should align with the functional area and learning/operational goal. They should also further define the goals in specific terms. The number of outcomes developed will depend on how broad the goal is and how complex the intended learning is. It's ok to have a lot of outcomes, you don't have to assess them all.

A **learning outcome** focuses on "how students will be different because of a learning experience, the knowledge, skills attitudes and habits of mind that students take with them from a learning experience" (Suskie, 2009, p.117).

> ***Example****: As a result of participating in Torero Days, students will be able to recognize the University mission statement.*

Aside from learning opportunities, there are many things we do to support the student experience like providing a safe, place for them to live, providing healthy options for dining, delivering services effectively and efficiently, etc. The services we offer that attend to the base of Maslow's hierarchy (physiological needs, safety, etc.) are considered **operational outcomes** rather than learning outcomes. Operational outcomes describe the intended effect that a service has instead of what a student learns by participating in a program, service or other intervention.

> ***Example:*** *As a result of renting equipment from Outdoor Adventures, students will be able to describe their experience as receiving good customer service.*

Why write learning outcomes?

Writing learning outcomes helps us to be more intentional about the learning opportunities we offer students and creates the opportunity to measure the learning that occurs. This means that we can:

- improve our ability to tell students what we hope they will learn through their participation in a program, leadership opportunity or service we offer;
- be more precise about the strategies we offer to meet the articulated outcomes;
- consider how we will assess learning at the start of the process.

All of this leads to more effective learning opportunities for our students.

Some questions to keep in mind as your write your learning outcomes and consider related assessment and program improvement:

- What do we want our students to learn?
- How will we know if they learn it?
- What will we do if they don't learn it?

As a division, we will use the following formula for writing learning outcomes. Writing outcomes with at least 1-2 other people often produces the most effective learning outcomes by incorporating multiple perspectives and engaging multiple people in the process.

Formula for Writing Learning Outcomes:
Condition + SWiBAT + Bloom Word + What

As a result of participating in Torero Days, students will be able to recognize the University mission statement.

Condition – the condition describes the program, leadership opportunity or service students will participate in or experience where the learning is intended to occur.

SWiBAT – an acronym for **s**tudents **wi**ll **b**e **a**ble **t**o… Using this format helps you write the learning outcome in a way that is focused on students and what they will be able to know, feel or do after participating.

Bloom Word – using a "Bloom word" in your learning outcome helps you to calibrate the type of learning you expect to the levels of Bloom's Taxonomy which demonstrates a progression in the levels of learning participants experience. For example, the learning outcome describing what students will learn through participating in a one-shot service project will use a Bloom word toward the bottom of the taxonomy rather than toward the top for a learning outcome for students participating in a recurring service project. Using a Bloom word also helps to ensure that your learning outcome will be measurable.

What – the "what" describes the actual thing you expect students to know, feel or do after participating. In the example provided above, the "what" is some content that students received during Torero Days about the University mission statement.

The following acronym describes the characteristics of a well-written learning outcome. Once you feel that you have a good learning outcome written, check it against these characteristics to see if you can improve it in any way.

SMART (Drucker, 1954)

S **Specific** – clear and definite terms describing expected abilities, knowledge, values, attitudes, and performance
M **Measurable** – it is feasible to get the data, data are accurate and reliable, issue can be assessed more than one way
A **Aggressive but Attainable** – consider stretch targets to improve program
R **Results-oriented** – describe what standards are expected for students
T **Time-bound** – describe where you would like to be within a specified period of time

Helpful Hints (Henning, 2007)

Use an iterative process to ensure the outcome is well written

Review outcomes with stakeholders

Words/Phrases to Avoid (Covert)

- Appreciate
- Become aware of
- Become familiar with
- Know
- Learn
- Understand

Don't include everything – only the most important outcomes, the ones you influence

Bloom's Taxonomy & Other Taxonomies for Learning

Bloom's taxonomy attempts to clarify the nebulous terms that can be associated with learning. The taxonomy is comprised of 3 learning domains: Cognitive, Affective, Psychomotor. The cognitive domain focuses on the learning process associated with knowledge, the affective with attitudes, feelings, emotions and the psychomotor with skills. Within each domain there are 5-6 categories, ranging from simple to more complex behaviors, each building on its predecessor. The concept of the taxonomy and associated learning domains helps educators to be more precise in the development of learning outcomes, associated strategies and measures.

Please see 'Taxonomy for Learning' on page 20 for a table that links action verbs to the various levels within each domain to help you write more effective learning outcomes.

Student Affairs Assessment Planning Matrix Example Continued

Note that there is a hyperlink to the unit's own worksheet in the Learning/Operational Outcomes column of the Matrix. At this point, you will begin filling in another worksheet. See below:

ASSISTANT DEAN OF STUDENTS		Assessment Plan							
Learning/ Operational Outcomes (Students will be able to…)	**Strategies**	**Measures**	**IRB**	**'09-'10**	**'10-'11**	**'11-'12**	**Timing**	**Lead**	**Reporting**
LO1.1 recognize the University's 5 Core Values (academic excellence, knowledge, community, ethical conduct, compassionate service).	S1.1.1 included in content of President's welcome	M1.1.1 Torero Days Survey	No	✓	✓	✓	annually in September following Torero Days	Marie Minnick	the results of the survey will be shared with the Assistant Vice President for Student Affairs/Dean of Students, the Torero Days Council, and included in the Assistant Dean of Students Annual Report. The information will be used to improve the program.
	S1.1.2 print core values in T-Days schedule								
	S1.1.3 included in content of T-Days								
LO1.2 recognize that the core curriculum supports the goals of a liberal arts education at USD.	S1.2.1 included in content of Preceptorial meeting								
LO1.3 recognize the main components of the University's Core Value of Community (committed to creating a welcoming community marked by respect for the individual; values people from different backgrounds; committed to creating an atmosphere of trust, safety and respect).	S1.3.1 included in content of President's welcome								
	S1.3.2 included in content of T-Days Chair welcome								
	S1.3.3 print core value of community in								
LO1.4 recognize the University mission statement.	S1.4.1 included in content of President's welcome								
	S1.4.2 included in content of T-Days Chair welcome								
	S1.4.3 print mission in T-Days schedule								

Learning/Operational Outcomes: Please list the learning/operational outcomes associated with each goal and ensure that they are aligned. Please label each learning outcome LO1.1, LO1.2 and so on for LG1. For LG2 label LO2.1, LO2.2 and so on with the first number mirroring that of the associated goal. For operational outcomes please label them OO1.1 and so on. Please use a new cell for each outcome.

***Example**: As a result of participating in Torero Days, students will be able to recognize the University mission statement.*

STEP FIVE – Articulate and Map Strategies to Outcomes

Strategies are the specific efforts you'll employ to achieve the outcomes. Mostly, these will be the specific programs or services offered but strategies may also include things like the way your staffing and/or physical space is structured, the hours your office is open, policies and procedures, etc. One strategy may align with multiple outcomes and each outcome may require several strategies to achieve it. Think creatively and be specific.

Student Affairs Assessment Planning Matrix Example Continued

Strategies: Please list the strategies associated with each learning/operational outcome. Strategies are the efforts you'll employ to achieve the outcome. You may have multiple strategies to achieve one outcome. Please label your strategies S1.1.1, S1.1.2 and so on with the first 2 numbers mirroring those of the associated outcome. Ensure that your strategies align directly with your outcome. Please use a new cell for each strategy.

Example: *There are several strategies associated with this learning outcome including mentioning the University mission statement in the Torero Days welcoming addresses, including the mission statement on the Torero Days schedule, etc.*

STEP SIX – Determine Assessment Methods for Learning/Operational Outcomes

Once you have articulated and mapped your functional areas, learning outcomes and strategies, the next step is to determine how you will measure your learning and operational outcomes. An acronym that can help remind us of the criteria for developing sound measures is:

MATURE Measures (UCF Operational Excellence and Assessment Support (2005))

M **Matches** – measure directly matches to the outcome it is trying to measure
A **Appropriate Methods** – uses appropriate direct and indirect methods
T **Targets** – indicates desired level of performance
U **Useful** – measures help identify what to improve
R **Reliable** – based on tested, known methods
E **Effective & Efficient** – characterize the outcome concisely

Direct Evidence
Direct methods provide direct evidence of what the student has or has not learned. Whenever possible we should try to gather direct evidence when measuring learning outcomes. Observation, pre-and post-testing and evaluation of projects/portfolios are examples of direct methods. However, typical indirect methods such as surveys, interviews, open-ended questionnaires and focus groups can provide direct evidence depending on the question. A question that asks students to list 2 resources that can help them with academic concerns provides direct evidence of learning. However a question that asks students to tell you if they know of resources that can help them with academic concerns provides indirect evidence of learning.

Indirect Evidence
Indirect methods measure opinions or thoughts about a students' own knowledge, skills, attitudes, learning experiences, perceptions of services received, etc. They do not measure the learning directly but can provide rich information. Typical examples of indirect methods are: survey, interview, focus group, etc. However, depending on the phrasing of the question, you may be able to gather direct evidence from typically indirect methods.

It's important to think creatively about different ways to assess learning. Often we can slightly tweak something we are already doing to include data collection and even analysis. Asking the question, "how will we know the learning occurred?" can help open up the options for measure.

Student Affairs Assessment Planning Matrix Example Continued

Measures: Please describe the measure(s) you plan to use to assess the degree to which the learning you intended actually occurred. You may have multiple measures for each outcome. Please label your Measures M1.1.1, M1.1.2 and so on with the first 2 numbers mirroring those of the associated outcome. Please use a new cell for each measure and ensure that your measures are 'MATURE'.

Example: *The learning outcome will be measured through a survey administered to all first year students in October following Torero Days. The questions will be designed to gather direct evidence, asking students to recognize the USD mission statement from a list of mission statements.*

IRB: Please review the conditions under which IRB approval is required and indicate if your measure needs IRB approval. IRB criteria can be found at http://www.sandiego.edu/irb/

Example: *In this case, the assessment project does not need to go through the IRB approval process because it does not meet any of the criteria requiring approval. Please see the USD*

IRB criteria at the above URL and page 23 for a list of questions to help you determine if you need IRB approval.

'09-'10: Please choose the 'check mark' from the drop down box if your measure will take place in the '09-'10 academic year and so on.

Example: *In the example, the assessment will take place annually so there is a check mark for all three columns.*

Timing: Please indicate the timing of your measure with as much specificity as possible. At minimum indicate the month and year.

Example: *The Assistant Dean of Students Unit will implement this assessment in October of 2009, week eight of the semester.*

Lead: Please indicate the name of the staff member responsible for the assessment project.

Example: *The person taking the lead in this assessment project is Marie Minnick.*

Reporting: Please indicate how you plan to report the results of your measure. Will it be used internally to make decisions? Will it be included in your annual report? Do you plan to present your findings within USD, outside USD? Etc.

Example: *In this example, the results of the survey will be shared with the Assistant Vice President for Student Affairs/Dean of Students, the Torero Days Advisory Council, and included in the Assistant Dean of Students Annual Report. The information will be used to improve the program.*

Data Analysis and Utilizing the Results

One of the most important components of assessment is making changes to your programs and services based on what you learn from your assessment. This is where we make sense of what students told us through the assessment and fine-tune our learning opportunities to enhance student learning. The final two columns of the Student Affairs Assessment Planning Matrix on page 8 ask you to briefly summarize the key findings from your assessment and articulate the changes you plan to make as a result of your findings.

STEP SEVEN – Develop 3-Year Assessment Plan

Creating an assessment plan for each unit will help the division coordinate assessment efforts much more effectively, reduce the risk of over-assessing our students and improve student participation in our assessment efforts. It will also help us to be mindful of planning assessment over a longer period of time than just one semester or one year.

The 'Measures' through 'Reporting' columns on the Assessment Planning Worksheet comprise the Assessment Plan so that it is linked to the functional areas, learning outcomes and strategies. The example from the Assessment Planning Worksheet is described above in Step Six.

GLOSSARY

Assessment terms can be defined in multiple ways. The following glossary will ensure that we are using consistent language as we define our learning outcomes, strategies and measures as a division.

Assessment - "any effort to gather, analyze, and interpret evidence which describes institutional, departmental, divisional, or agency effectiveness." (Upcraft & Schuh, 1996)

Assessment Plan – a document that outlines a unit's plan for assessing various learning outcomes and operational outcomes over a certain period of time.

Benchmarking – "a continuous, systematic process for evaluating the products, services, and work processes of organizations that are recognized as representing best practices for the purposes of organizational improvement." Internal benchmarking compares the products, services and work processes within an organization and competitive benchmarking compares them with the organization's direct competitors. (Spendolini, 1992)

Direct Method – measures student learning outcomes directly. Direct methods provide "evidence of student learning that is tangible, visible, self-explanatory evidence of exactly what students have and haven't learned" (Suskie, 2004, p.95)

Environmental Assessment – "a process that determines and evaluates how the various elements and conditions of the college campus milieu affect student learning and growth" (Upcraft and Shuh, 1996, p.167)

Evaluation – "any effort to use assessment evidence to improve institutional, departmental, divisional, or agency effectiveness." (Upcraft and Shuh, 1996, p.19)

Functional Area - the distinct functions that the unit engages in to provide services and learning opportunities for students.

Indirect Method – measures opinions or thoughts about students' own knowledge, skills, attitudes, learning experiences, perceptions of services received, etc. Indirect methods "provide signs that students are probably learning, but the evidence of exactly what they are learning is less clear and less-convincing" (Suskie, 2004, p.95)

Inputs – the various resources available to you to implement your strategy such as budget, time, materials, etc.

Needs Assessment – "…the process of determining the presence or absence of the factors and conditions, resources, services, and learning opportunities that students need in order to meet their educational goals and objectives within the context of an institution's mission." (Upcraft and Shuh, 1996, p.128)

Objective – "the intended effect of a program, service or intervention, but is more specific than a goal. It is facilitator focused." (Henning, 2007)

Outcome – "the desired effect of a program, service, or intervention but is more specific than a goal. It is participant focused." (Henning, 2007)

- **Learning Outcome** – focuses on "how students will be different because of a learning experience, the knowledge, skills attitudes and habits of mind that students take with them from a learning experience" (Suskie, 2009, p.117)
- **Operational Outcome** – focuses on the desired effect of the services Student Affairs units provide that target the base level of Maslow's hierarchy of needs such as physiological needs and safety. Operational outcomes can also focus on the efficiency and effectiveness of the services we deliver. Some examples are providing healthy food options, safe and comfortable living options on campus, and timely housing assignments, etc.

Outcomes Assessment – measures the effect on student learning and development or other intended outcomes such as operational.

Output – a tangible product that marks progression toward an outcome such as the number of programs offered, attendance, etc.

Qualitative Assessment – "uses flexible, naturalistic methods and is usually analyzed by looking for recurring patterns and themes. Examples include reflective writing, notes from interviews/focus groups, notes from observation." Suskie, 2004, p.106

Quantitative Assessment – "uses structured, predetermined response options that can be summarized into meaningful numbers and analyzed statistically. Examples include test scores, rubric scores, survey ratings." Suskie, 2004, p.106

Satisfaction – "seeks to determine if student or client experiences with programs, services, or learning opportunities are of high quality and consistent with the institution's mission." (Shuh and Upcraft, 2001, p.142)

Stakeholders – any party who has a vested interest in the issue, program or results of your assessment.

Strategy – "a means to achieve an outcome or goal". (Henning, 2007)

Tracking/Usage – "tracking who uses student services, programs and facilities" (Upcraft and Shuh, 1996, p.113)

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RESOURCES:

Taxonomy for Learning

Taxonomies for learning attempt to classify the nebulous terms that can be associated with learning. The taxonomy comprises 3 learning domains: Cognitive, Affective, Psychomotor. The cognitive domain focuses on the learning process associated with knowledge, the affective with attitudes, feelings, emotions and the psychomotor with skills. Within each domain there are 5-6 'categories', ranging from simple to more complex behaviors, each building on its predecessor. The 'descriptions and examples' describe the category and the 'action verbs' are the verbs associated with the category as we attempt to describe the level of learning we expect when writing learning outcomes.

Cognitive Domain:

Category	Description	Finer Descriptions and Examples	Action Verbs
Remember	Retrieve relevant knowledge from long-term memory	Locate knowledge in long-term memory that is consistent with presented material (e.g., Recognize the dates of important events in US history)	Recognize, identify
		Retrieve relevant knowledge from long-term memory (Recall dates of important events in US history)	Recall, retrieve
Understand	Construct meaning from instructional messages, including oral, written, and graphic communication	Changing from one form of representation (e.g., numerical) to another (e.g., verbal) (e.g., paraphrase important speeches and documents)	Interpret, clarify, paraphrase, represent, translate
		Finding a specific example or illustration of a concept or principle (e.g., Give examples of various artistic painting styles)	Exemplify, illustrate
		Determining that something belongs to a category (e.g., concept or principle) (e.g., Classify observed or described cases of mental disorders)	Classify, categorize, subsume
		Abstracting a general theme or major point(s) (e.g., Write a short summary of the events portrayed on a videotape)	Summarize, abstract, generalize
		Drawing a logical conclusion from presented information (e.g., In learning a foreign language, infer grammatical principles from examples)	Infer, conclude, extrapolate, interpolate, predict
		Detecting correspondences between two ideas, objects and the like (e.g., Compare historical events to contemporary situations	Compare, contrast, map, match
		Constructing a cause-and-effect model of a system (e.g., Explain the causes of important 18th century events in France)	Explain, construct, model
Apply	Carry out or use a procedure in a given situation	Applying a procedure to a familiar task (e.g. Divide one whole number by another whole number, both with multiple digits)	Execute, carry out
		Applying a procedure to an unfamiliar task (e.g., Use Newton's Second Law in situations in which it is appropriate)	Implement, use
Analyze	Break material into its constituent parts and determine how the parts relate to one another and to an overall structure or purpose	Distinguish relevant from irrelevant parts or important from unimportant parts of presented material (e.g., Distinguish between relevant and irrelevant numbers in a mathematical word problem)	Differentiate, discriminate, distinguish, focus, select
		Determining how elements fit or function within a structure (e.g., Structure evidence in a historical description into evidence for and against a particular historical explanation)	Organize, find coherence, integrate, outline, parse, structure
		Determine a point of view, bias, values, or intent underlying presented material (e.g., Determine the point of view of the author of an essay in terms of his or her political perspective)	Attribute, deconstruct
Evaluate	Make judgments based on criteria and standards	Detecting inconsistencies or fallacies within a process or product; determining whether a process or product has internal consistency; detecting the effectiveness of a procedure as it is being implemented (e.g., Determine if a scientist's conclusions follow from observed data)	Check, coordinate, detect, monitor, test
		Detecting inconsistencies between a product and external criteria, determining whether a product has external consistency; detecting the appropriateness of a procedure for a given problem (e.g., Judge which of two methods is the best way to solve a given problem)	Critique, judge
Create	Put elements together to form a coherent or functional whole; reorganize elements into a new pattern or structure	Coming up with alternative hypotheses based on criteria (e.g., Generate hypotheses to account for an observed phenomenon)	Generate, hypothesize
		Devising a procedure for accomplishing some task (e.g., Plan a research paper on a given historical topic)	Plan, design
		Inventing a product (e.g., Build habitats for a specific purpose)	Produce, construct

Reference: (Anderson, et al., 2001)

Affective Domain:

Affective	Description	Examples of activity or types of measure	Action Verbs
Receive	Open to experience, willing to hear	Listen to teacher or trainer; take interest in session or learning experience; take notes; make time for learning experience; participate passively	Ask, listen, focus, attend, take part, discuss, acknowledge, hear, be open to, retain, follow, concentrate, read, do, feel
Respond	React and participate actively	Participate actively in group discussion/activity; interest in outcomes; enthusiasm for action; question and probe ideas; suggest interpretation	React, respond, seek clarification, interpret, clarify, provide other references and examples, contribute, question, present, cite, become animated or excited, write, perform
Value	Attach values and express personal opinions	Decide worth and relevance of ideas, experiences; accept or commit to particular stance or action	Argue, challenge, debate, refute, confront, justify, persuade, criticize
Organize or Conceptualize Values	Reconcile internal conflicts; develop value system	Qualify and quantify personal views; state personal position and reasons; state beliefs	Build, develop, formulate, defend, modify, relate, prioritize, reconcile, contrast, arrange, compare
Internalize or Characterize Values	Adopt belief system and philosophy	Self-reliant; behave consistently with personal value set	Act, display, influence, solve, practice

Adapted from http://www.businessballs.com/bloomstaxonomyoflearningdomains.htm
Reference: (Krathwohl, Bloom, & Masia, 1964)

Psychomotor Domain:

Category	Description	Examples	Action Verbs
Imitation	Copy the action of another; observe and replicate	Watch teacher or trainer and repeat action, process or activity	Copy, follow, replicate, repeat, adhere
Manipulation	Reproduce activity from instruction or memory	Carry out task from written or verbal instruction	Re-create, build, perform, execute, implement
Precision	Execute skill reliably, independent of help	Perform a task or activity with expertise and to high quality without assistance or instruction; able to demonstrate an activity to other learners	Demonstrate, complete, show, perfect, calibrate, control
Articulation	Adapt and integrate expertise to satisfy a non-standard objective	Relate and combine associated activities to develop methods to meet varying, novel requirements	Construct, solve, combine, coordinate, integrate, adapt, develop, formulate, modify, master
Naturalization	Automated, unconscious mastery of activity and related skills at strategic level	Define aim, approach and strategy for use of activities to meet strategic need	Design, specify, manage, invent, project-manage

Adapted from http://www.businessballs.com/bloomstaxonomyoflearningdomains.htm
Reference: (Dave, 1972)

360 Action Verbs for Writing Student Learning Outcome Statements in Higher Education

ABSTRACT • ACCOMMODATE • ACKNOWLEDGE • ACTIVATE • ADAPT • ADJUDICATE • ADJUST • ADMINISTER • ADORN • ADVISE
ADVOCATE • AGGREGATE • ALLEGORIZE • AMALGAMATE • AMEND • AMPLIFY • ANALOGIZE • ANALYZE • ANATOMIZE • ANNOTATE
APPORTION • APPRAISE • ARBITRATE • ARGUE • ARRANGE • ARTICULATE • ASCERTAIN • ASSAY • ASSEMBLE • ASSERT • ASSIGN
AUTHENTICATE • AUTHOR • BENEFACT • BLEND • BRAINSTORM • BUDGET • CALIBRATE • CANVASS • CARICATURE • CATALOG
CATEGORIZE • CHALLENGE • CHECK • CHERISH • CHOOSE • CHRONICLE • CIPHER • CITE • CLASSIFY • COLLABORATE • COLLECT
COMBAT • COMMENTATE • COMPARE • COMPETE • COMPILE • COMPOSE • COMPUTE • CONCILIATE • CONCLUDE • CONFIRM
CONJECTURE • CONSERVE • CONSTRUCT • CONSTRUE • CONSULT • CONTEXTUALIZE • CONTRAST • CONTROL • CONTROVERT
CONVERT • CONVINCE • COPY • CORRECT • CORROBORATE • COST • COSTUME • CREATE • CRITIQUE • CROSS-EXAMINE
CUSTOMIZE • DANCE • DEBATE • DEBUG • DECIPHER • DECODE • DECONSTRUCT • DEDUCE • DEFEND • DEFINE • DELEGATE
DELIBERATE • DELINEATE • DEPICT • DERIVE • DESIGN • DETAIL • DETECT • DETERMINE • DEVISE • DIAGNOSE • DICTATE
DIFFERENTIATE • DIRECT • DISAGGREGATE • DISCOURSE • DISCOVER • DISCUSS • DISPOSE • DISSECT • DISTILL • DISTINGUISH
DOLLY • DRAFT • DRAMATIZE • DRAW • DRIVE • DRILL • EDIT • EDUCE • ELICIT • ELIMINATE • ELUCIDATE • EMBELLISH • EMEND
EMPATHIZE • EMPLOY • ENACT • ENCODE • ENGINEER • ENSURE • ENUMERATE • ENUNCIATE • EPITOMIZE • ESPOUSE • ESTABLISH
ESTIMATE • EVALUATE • EVOKE • EXCOGITATE • EXECUTE • EXEMPLIFY • EXERCISE • EXPERIMENT • EXPLAIN • EXPLICATE • EXPLOIT
EXPRESS • EXTRICATE • FABRICATE • FICTIONALIZE • FILTER • FOOTNOTE • FORECAST • FORMULATE • FRAME • GATHER
GENERALIZE • GENERATE • GLEAN • GLOSS • GRAPH • GAUGE • HARMONIZE • HONOR • HYPOTHESIZE • IDENTIFY • ILLUSTRATE
IMPEACH • IMPROVE • IMPROVISE • INCORPORATE • INDUCE • INFER • INITIATE • INQUIRE • INSPECT • INSTANTIATE • INTEGRATE
INTERPRET • INTERPOLATE • INTERROGATE • INTERVIEW • INTRODUCE • INSURE • INVENT • INVEST • JOURNAL • JUDGE • JUSTIFY
LABEL • LAUNCH • LEAD • LEVEL • LOCATE • MAINTAIN • MANIPULATE • MAP • MARKUP • MATCH • MEASURE • MEDIATE • MIMIC
MODEL • MODULATE • MONITOR • MYTHICIZE • NARRATE • NAVIGATE • NETWORK • NOMINATE • NOTATE • NOVELIZE • NURSE
OBEY • OPERATE • OPINE • OPTIMIZE • ORCHESTRATE • ORGANIZE • ORIENT • ORIENTEER • ORNAMENT • OUTLINE • PAINT • PAN
PARAPHRASE • PENETRATE • PERSEVERE • PERSUADE • PETITION • PHOTOGRAPH • PINPOINT • PLAN • PLAY • PLOT • POETICIZE
POLISH • POLL • PORTRAY • POSTERIZE • PRECIPITATE • PREDICT • PRESCRIBE • PRESENT • PRESERVE • PRIORITIZE • PROBE
PRODUCE • PRODUCTIZE • PROFILE • PROGRAM • PROJECT • PROMOTE • PROMPT • PRONOUNCE • PROPOSE • PROTECT • PROTOTYPE
PROVE • PROVOKE • QUALIFY • QUANTIFY • QUANTITATE • QUERY • QUEST • QUESTION • QUOTE • RANK • RATE • RATIONALIZE
RATIOCINATE • REARRANGE • RECALL • RECITE • RECOMMEND • RECONCILE • RECONCILIATE • RECONSTRUCT • RECORD • RECOUNT
RECTIFY • RECYCLE • REDACT • REDUCE • REENACT • REFINE • REHEARSE • REIFY • REORGANIZE • REPAIR • REPRODUCE • RESOLVE
RESPECT • RETRIEVE • REVISE • SELECT • REVERSE-ENGINEER • REVISE • REWRITE • ROLE-PLAY • SAFEGUARD • SCHEDULE • SCORE
SCRIPT • SCULPT • SHAPE • SECURE • SIFT • SIMPLIFY • SIMULATE • SING • SKETCH • SOLICIT • SOLVE • SORT • SPECIFY
SPECULATE • STATE • STEER • STIPULATE • STORYBOARD • STRATEGIZE • STREAMLINE • STYLE • SUBLIMATE • SUBSTANTIATE
SUGGEST • SUMMARIZE • SURVEY • SUSTAIN • SYMBOLIZE • SYMPHONIZE • SYNTHESIZE • TAG • TAILOR • TEACH • TEST
THEORIZE • TOLERATE • TRACE • TRACK • TRAIN • TRANSFER • TRANSFORM • TRANSLATE • TRANSMIT • TRIAGE • TRIANGULATE
TROUBLESHOOT • TRUST • TUNE • TWEAK • TYPIFY • UTILIZE • VALIDATE • VALUE • VERBALIZE • VERIFY • VOTE • WRITE • ZONE • ZOOM

SDSU Center for Teaching & Learning *ctl.sdsu.edu*
Division of Undergraduate Studies

Does My Assessment Project Require Institutional Review Board (IRB) Approval?

As the principle investigator, you are responsible for determining whether or not your project requires IRB approval. The following questions are designed to help you understand if your assessment project needs to go through an IRB review. If you respond yes to any of these questions, please review the full requirements for proposal submission at:
http://www.sandiego.edu/irb/

Questions to consider:

1. Is your project considered research?
    a. Is it designed to develop or contribute to generalizable knowledge?
        i. Common projects that would be considered research include national studies such as NSSE, CIRP, etc., projects where you plan to present the results or process beyond the USD community such as at a conference or through publishing a paper. Note that if there is a chance in the future that you may want to present or publish the results or process of your project, you must secure IRB approval before the project begins. You cannot get approval after the fact.

2. By participating in the project, will participants undergo any harm or discomfort beyond what they might encounter in daily life or during the performance of routine physical or psychological examinations or tests?

3. Does your project target (not simply include) a particular religious, racial, ethnic, or sexual-orientation population?

4. Does your project ask participants to report illicit or illegal behavior?

5. Is your project receiving funding or other support from federal or state government?

6. Is there any departmental, institutional, federal or state government requiring IRB approval?

If your project requires IRB approval, you should allow **2 weeks** for your request to be approved. You will need to secure department head approval (signature) as well as the signature of Dr. Jane Georges before submitting your IRB proposal.

Interpreting Survey Data

Using your responses to represent a larger population

If you are either using a sample or you have surveyed the whole population with a less than 100% response rate, you need to ensure that your responses are representative of the larger population before interpreting the results. There are two things to consider:

1. **Representativeness**
    a. Your responses should mirror the larger population in three areas gender, class year, race/ethnicity.
    b. You must ask these questions on your survey so that you have the data to compare to the institutional data. Please see the standard format for these questions below.
    c. Retrieve the institutional data with which you need to compare your responses:
        i. http://www.sandiego.edu/irp/
            - select 'Stat Book' from the left menu bar
            - log in

        ii. For Gender – select 'Enrollment' from the left menu bar
            - Under 'Enrollment by Level and Gender' select 'Fall 1990-Present'
            - Use the appropriate percentages for the gender and level you are studying.

        iii. For Class Year – select 'Enrollment' from the left menu bar
            - Under the 'Fall Enrollment' bar select 'Enrollment by Class'
            - Calculate the percentages needed to compare to your responses.

        iv. For Race/Ethnicity – select 'Enrollment' from the left menu bar
            - Select 'Race/Ethnicity' from the left menu bar
            - Select either 'Total Enrollment' or 'Undergraduate Enrollment' or 'Graduate Enrollment' depending on the population you are studying.
            - Use the appropriate percentages for the groups you are studying.
    d. Compare your responses to those of the larger population you are studying
        i. For Gender, Class Year and Race/Ethnicity, the percentages in your response rate should fall within a few percentage points of the institutional percentages.
        ii. If your survey responses vary by more than a few percentage points from institutional data, you will be limited in the ways you can use the data. Please consult with someone who has a background in statistical analysis.
2. **Power**
    a. In any survey where you'd like to assert that your responses represent the larger population, you must have at least 100 responses and they must be representative of the larger population (see above)
    b. If you are interested in comparing responses among groups (gender, class year, race/ethnicity, etc.) you will need to have at least 100 responses from each group.
    c. If you gather fewer than 100 responses and/or those responses are not representative, you will be limited in the ways you can use the data. Please consult with someone who has a background in statistical analysis.

Standard Survey Question Format for Gender, Class Year, Race/Ethnicity

Gender (Check one):
- Male
- Female

Class Year (Check one):
- Freshman (0-30 units)
- Sophomore (30-60 units)
- Junior (60-90 units)
- Senior (90-124 units)
- Graduate
- Law

Race/Ethnicity

Are you Hispanic or Latino?

☐ Yes, Hispanic or Latino
☐ No

Please check any of the following Hispanic groups that apply to you:

☐ Hispanic, South or Central American *(excluding Brazil)*
☐ Hispanic, Mexican or Mexican American
☐ Hispanic, Puerto Rican

In addition, please select one or more of the following groups to describe yourself:

☐ American Indian/Alaska Native (including all original people of the Americas)
☐ Asian
☐ Asian, Filipino
☐ Asian, Indian
☐ Black or African American (including Africa and Caribbean)
☐ Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander (original peoples)
☐ White
☐ White, Eastern European
☐ White, Middle Eastern