Taking Aim at Student Learning

Connecting Learning Outcomes to Your Goals

THE UNIVERSITY OF IOWA **Division of Student Life**

Outline

- Define *assessment*, *student learning assessment*, and *learning*

- Describe the relationship between student learning assessment and Division of Student Life goals and values

- Define *student learning outcomes* (SLOs) and describe their format and desired characteristics

- Where to go from here

- Questions

- Brief Assessment

At the end of this session, you will be able to:

- Define *student learning outcomes* (SLOs) and describe their format and desired characteristics

- Describe how assessment can help you in your work

- Write an effective student learning outcome using the SWiBAT format

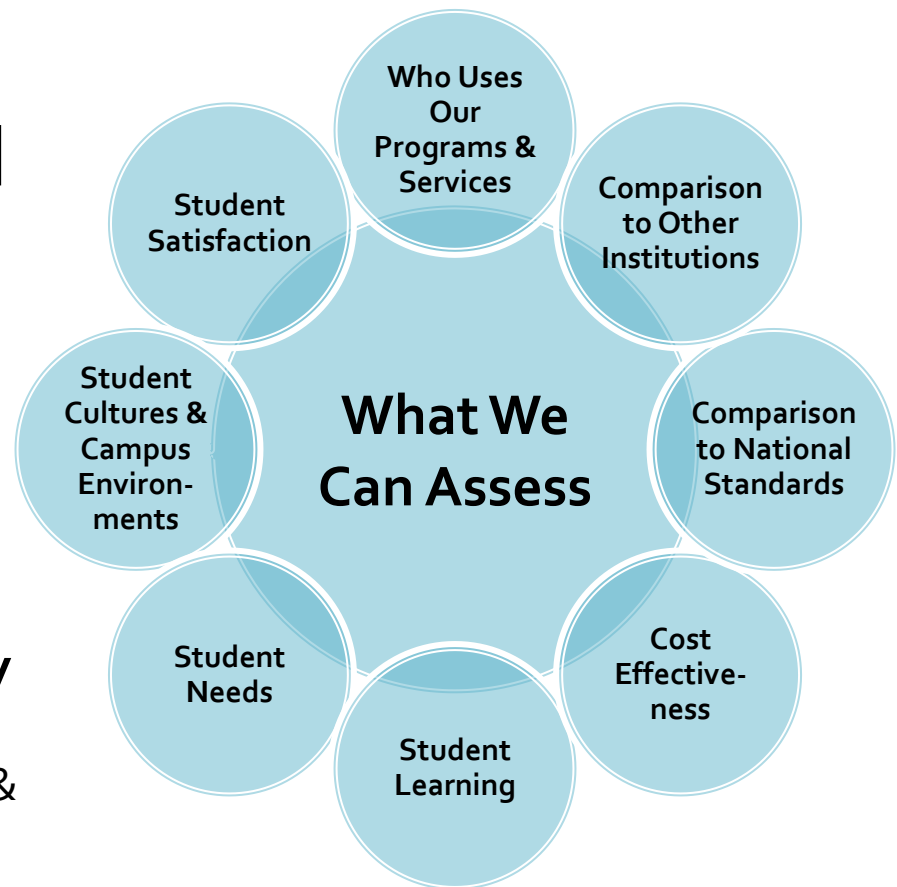# Who gets excited when you hear the word "assessment"?

Are we excited when we talk about the ways students grow as a result of our programs and services?

Assessment is a means to these ends.

What is assessment?

- "Any effort to gather, analyze, and interpret evidence that describes institutional, departmental, divisional, or agency effectiveness" (Upcraft & Schuh, 1996, p. 18)

What do we mean by *learning?*

Cognitive (knowledge)

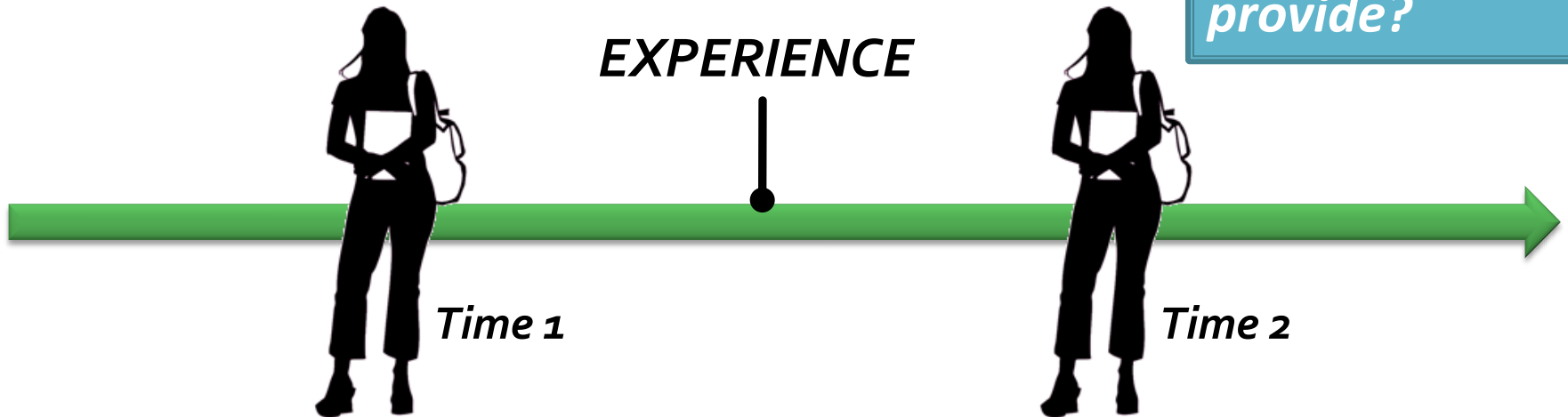Affective (attitude)

Psycho-Motor (skills)
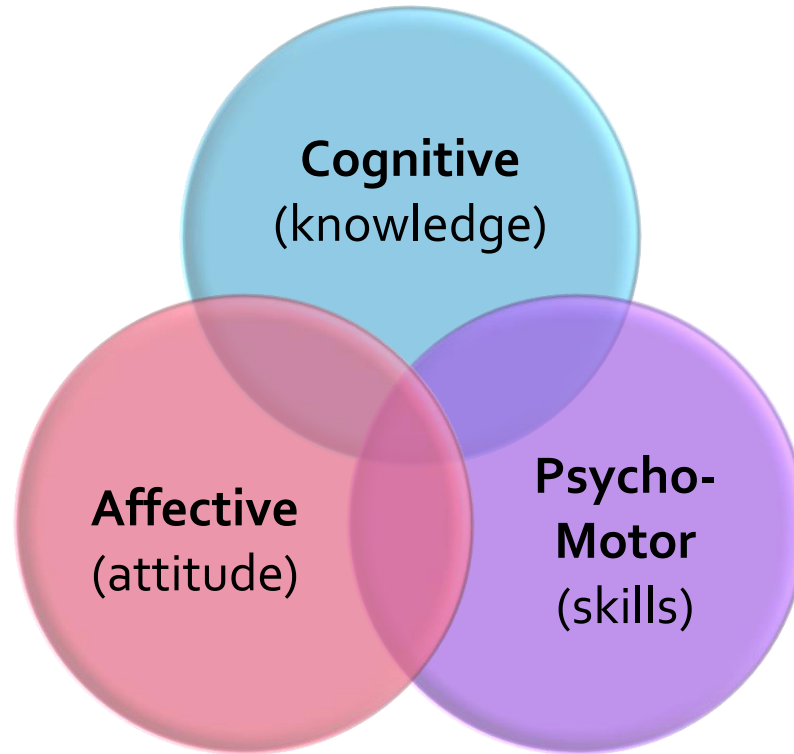
DOMAINS OF LEARNING

What are student learning outcomes (SLOs)?

- Goals that describe "the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and habits of mind that students take with them from a learning experience" (Suskie, 2009, p. 75)

What should students be able to do as a result of the programs and services we provide?
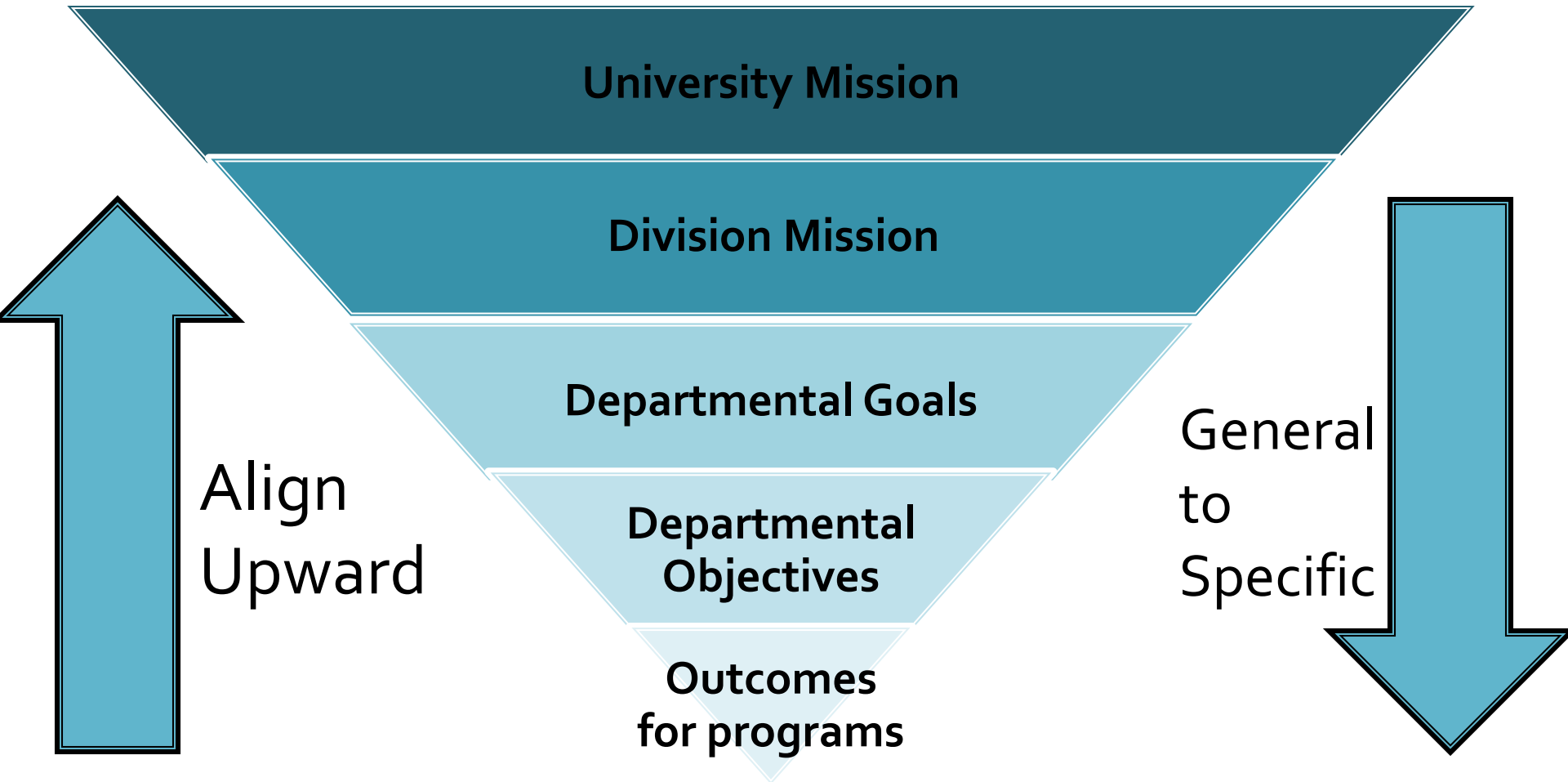
EXPERIENCE

Time 1

Time 2

Prioritizing SLOs

- Determine which SLOs are *nice* and which SLOs are *needed*

- Your program or service works *in concert* with others in the department – it does not need to do it all

- Aim for 3-5 SLOs per program or service

Connecting outcomes to the Big Picture

Connecting outcomes to the Big Picture: Example

"To educate students for success and fulfillment in a diverse world…"

"To support student success…through educationally purposeful activities"

"OSL provides diverse social, cultural, and educational programs…"

"Students participating in Dance Marathon will list at least 3 types of family support funded by DM."
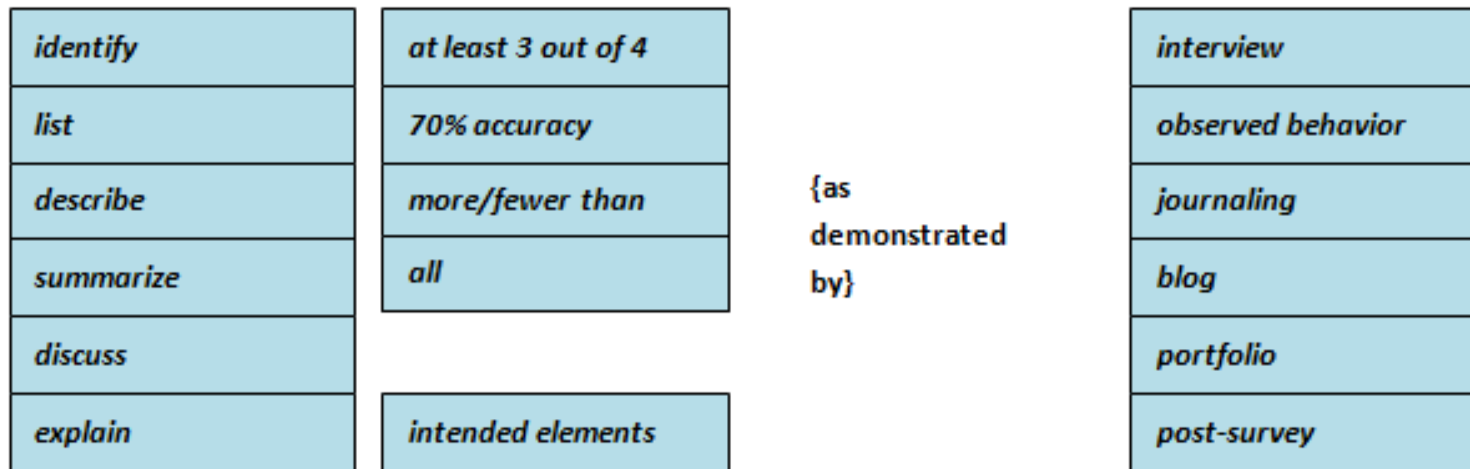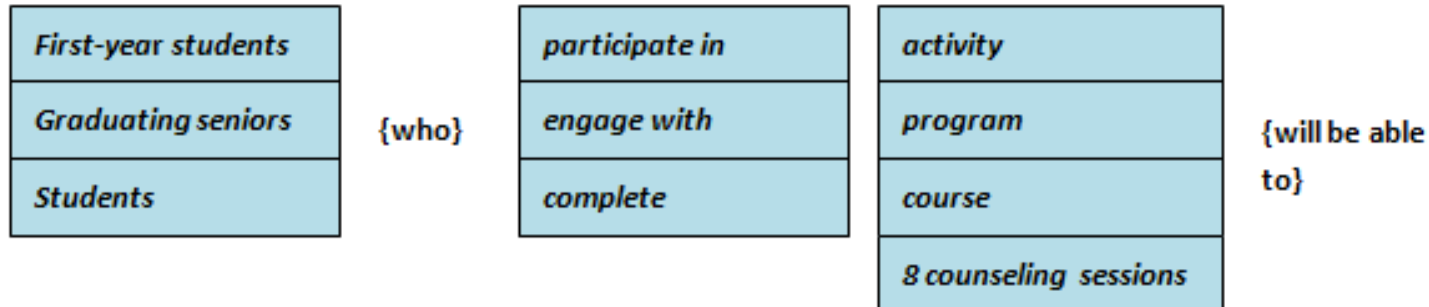
It's all nice, but what's *really* essential?

- What really *has* to happen for you to know that program or service did its job?

- What *must* occur for you to know that the time and energy devoted to that program or service was well spent?

Format of SLOs

- **SWiBAT: Students will be able to _____.**
  - **Examples:**
    - Students will be able to successfully discuss accommodation needs with their instructors (Student Disability Services)
    - Students who work as intramural officials will be able to demonstrate appropriate conflict resolution skills in an emotional environment (Recreational Services)
    - Students who participate in The Path will be able to identify at least two academic support resources on campus (Residence Life)

Format of SLOs

First-year students	participate in	activity
Graduating seniors	engage with	program
Students	complete	course
		8 counseling sessions

{who} ... {will be able to}

identify	at least 3 out of 4	interview
list	70% accuracy	observed behavior
describe	more/fewer than	journaling
summarize	all	blog
discuss		portfolio
explain	intended elements	post-survey

{as demonstrated by}

Keeling & Associates, 2007

Desired characteristics of SLOs

- Align with department, division, and institution goals

- Describe a behavior that is:
  - meaningful,
  - specific,
  - measureable, and
  - attainable

- Describe a <u>single</u> behavior

- Describe knowledge, skills, attitudes, and habits of mind (i.e., <u>learning</u>)

Common "trip ups"

- Using "action words" that are hard to measure (appreciate, be aware of, understand)

- Multiple outcomes in one

- SLOs that aren't really about learning

Fixing SLOs

- Students will be able to…
    - …appreciate the benefits of exercise
    - …value exercise as a stress reduction tool
    - …identify at least 3 benefits of exercise

- Students will be able to…
    - …access resources at The University of Iowa
    - …develop and apply effective problem solving skills that would enable one to adequately navigate through the proper resources within the university
    - …identity the university resource most pertinent to their concern

A note about new programs

- Begin with the end in mind: **What is your goal?**
- What should a student know or be able to do to respond to that goal? **(Outcomes)**
- Next, what content will support these outcomes? **(Content)**
- After that, what methods will effectively deliver this content? **(Methods)**
- Finally, how will we know if students have achieved the outcomes **(Assessment)**

Where to go from here