

Diné College Assessment Handbook

Rev: September 2024

Office of Assessment & Curriculum

Approved by:

The Sihasin Committee	12/19/2024
Provost Council	1/22/2025
Executive Team	2/12/2025
Academic & Student Success Committee	
Board of Regents	



Dine College

Who we are

Diné College is the first tribally controlled and accredited collegiate institution in the United States. Established in 1968 as Navajo Community College, it was later renamed Diné College. The Navajo Nation sought to create an institution of higher education that encouraged Navajo youth to become contributing members of the Navajo Nation and the world.

Mission

Rooted in Diné language and culture, our mission is to advance quality post-secondary student learning and development to ensure the well-being of the Diné People.

Vision

Our vision is to improve continuously our programs and services to make Diné College the exemplary higher education institution for the Diné People.

Special Thanks to Ashima Singh

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Glossary of assessment terms

DC – Diné College

HLC – Higher Learning Commission

ILO – Institutional Learning Outcomes

OAC – Office of Assessment and Curriculum

OIPR – Office of Institutional Planning and Reporting

PSLO – Program Student Learning Outcomes

Introduction

The Purpose of Assessment at Diné College

The 2020 edition of the Diné College Assessment Handbook defined assessment as “a continuous cycle of self-evaluation and self-reflection” and its purpose “to transform and enhance the quality of learning, instruction, curriculum, and institutional effectiveness.” These statements about what assessment is and aims to achieve effectively capture the college’s faculty, staff, and administrators’ commitment to student success.

2024 Revisions to the Assessment Process at Diné College

In April 2023, the Higher Learning Commission (HLC), the accrediting body for Diné College, gave it a “Met with Concern” designation regarding its assessment of student learning. The college was asked to demonstrate the following:

- Clarification and refinement of the current assessment processes to ensure faculty and staff understand the processes sufficiently to engage in meaningful assessment of student learning outcomes.
- Evidence of substantial involvement of faculty in refinement and implementation of assessment processes.
- Evidence of systematic acceptance and implementation of faculty-approved assessment plans in each of the areas of institutional, general education, and program learning outcomes.
- Evidence of analysis/discussion of student learning outcome assessment data.
- Evidence of use of student learning outcome data to inform changes in each of the areas of academic programs, general education, and co-curricular units.
- Evidence of linkage between assessment data and budgeting, where appropriate.
- Ongoing professional development in assessment for all faculty to develop the necessary tools to promote a culture of continuous improvement through assessment (HLC, 2023).

Conversations with faculty during the college’s Assessment Days in May 2024 revealed that, despite having an assessment handbook, most faculty were unclear about their role in assessment. A follow-up review by an external consultant (Singh, 2024) of Diné College’s fidelity to assessment processes described in the previous handbook (Diné College, 2020) indicated that faculty inconsistently submitted prescribed program assessment reports. A vast majority of submitted reports demonstrated faculty’s emerging understanding of assessment and its

various elements ranging from program student learning outcomes (PSLOs) to curriculum matrices and using findings to make improvements (colloquially known as “closing the loop”). However, most programs and their faculty need support in developing their understanding of assessment processes and related utility in program improvement.

Consequently, the Office of the Provost determined a revised assessment plan – and handbook – were necessary to prioritize **reduced** faculty workload while making assessment easier to understand, systematic, and meaningful. Diné College’s commitment to faculty teaching and student learning led to this revised assessment plan and handbook.

College Stakeholders and Programs Affected by the Revisions

The revisions in the assessment plan and handbook impact the following people and units:

- Faculty who teach in academic and General Education programs.
- All academic degree-granting programs.
- The General Education program.
- Staff and administrators engaged in serving students, either directly or indirectly.
- Staff and administrators engaged in co-curricular activities.
- Students who benefit from the work of DC faculty, staff, and administrators.

Diné College Educational Philosophy and Assessment

Nihina'nitin, Sa'ah Naaghái Bik'eh Hózhóón bił hadít'éego, dóó índá Diné yee iiná íí'ínígi át'éego nahasdzáán bikáa'gi dóó yádihíł biyaagi bohónéedzánígi át'éego yee hiná. Díí binahjį' t'áá altsodéé' bik'í hwiinít'įį'go bitah yá'áhoot'éehgo yee iiná íí'įį dooleet.

Our educational principles are based on Sa'ah Naaghái Bik'eh Hózhóón, the Diné traditional living system, which places human life in harmony with the natural world and universe. The system provides for protection from the imperfections in life and for the development of well-being. The principles are four-fold:

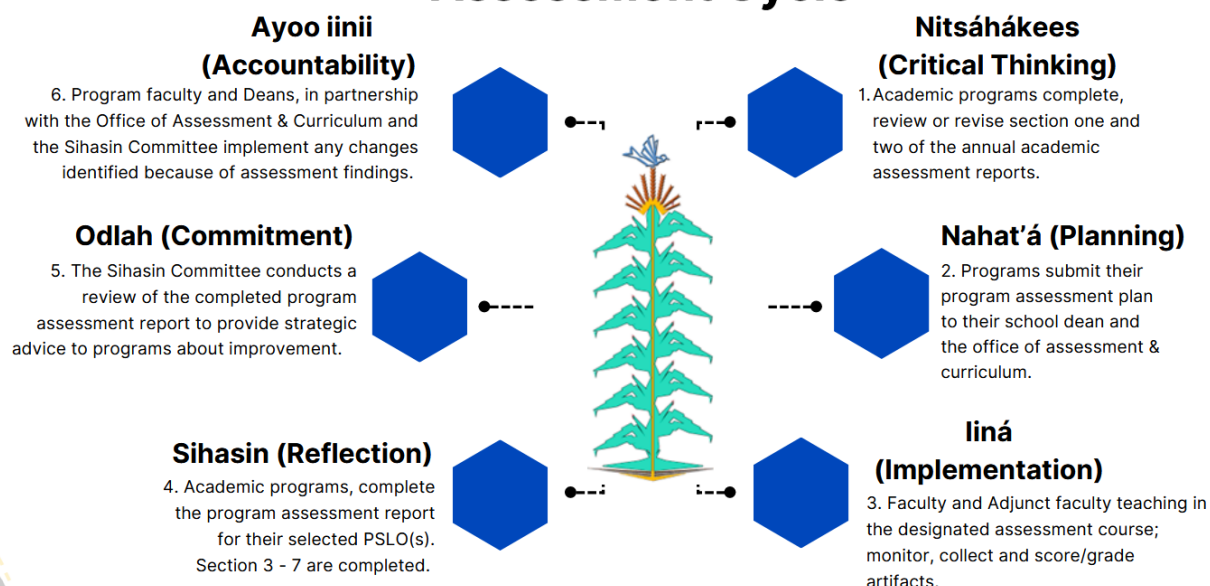
- Nitsáhákees. Thinking. Baa nitsídžíkees. Apply the techniques of reasoning. Analyze alternative solutions through the use of the principles of logic and creativity.
- Nahat'á. Planning. Nahat'á anitsíkees bee yáti' dóó íishjání óolzin. Develop and demonstrate communication skills. Nahat'á nahaaldeet. Demonstrate systematic organization skills.
- liná. Implementation. T'áá hó ájít'éego hózhóogo oodááł. Demonstrate self-direction based on personal values consistent with the moral standards of society. T'áá hó ájít'éego hózhóogo oonish. Demonstrate quality, participation, work, and materials.
- Siihasin. Reflection and assurance. Siihasingo oodááł. Demonstrate competency. Siihasin nahaaldeet. Demonstrate confidence.

The Office of Assessment and Curriculum, in partnership with Student Affairs, added Oodlah (Commitment) and Ayoo iinii (Accountability) to the academic and co-curricular assessment cycle to “close the loop”.

Annual Academic Program Assessment Cycle

Dine College's revised six-step annual assessment cycle is streamlined to help academic programs conduct meaningful assessment of student learning regularly and sustainably. It will also help the Office of Assessment and Curriculum track of the health of the assessment process itself and make necessary changes on an annual basis.

Annual Academic Program Assessment Cycle



1. ***Nitsáhákees (Critical Thinking)***: During year one of the four-year cycle, academic programs complete, review or revise section one and two of the annual academic assessment reports (see Appendix A), which includes the program's student learning outcomes (PSLO), alignment to institutional learning outcomes ((ILOs) see Appendix E), designated assessment course(s) and artifact(s) for assessment. Faculty are required to assess at least one PSLO every year and continuously gather data for all PSLOs in which the courses are taught.
2. ***Nahat'á (Planning)***: During year one of the four-year cycle, program faculty submit their program assessment plan (section one and two), to their school Dean. Deans will review the assessment plan and approve prior to submitting to the Office of Assessment and Curriculum. This step promotes on-going communication about program assessment among faculty, school deans and the Office of Assessment and Curriculum.
3. ***liná (Implementation)***: Every academic year, program faculty teaching the designated courses for assessment actively monitor, collect and score/grade the assessment assignment, "artifact". The program lead is responsible for ensuring all sections of a designated assessment course collect and score/grade the "artifact" in Canvas. Adjunct faculty are expected to participate.
4. ***Sihasin (Reflection)***: During fall/spring assessment days, academic programs reflect on their assessment data and complete sections 3 to 7 of their program assessment report.
 - a. ***Section 3***: Analyzing PSLO Data and Making Decisions
 - b. ***Section 4***: Valuable Assessment-Related Activities Related to Academic Program Review
 - c. ***Section 5***: Communicating and Maintaining PSLOs
 - d. ***Section 6***: Assessment Materials
 - e. ***Section 7***: Assessment Support
5. ***Oodlah (Commitment)***: The Sihasin Committee conducts a review of the completed program assessment reports to provide strategic advice to programs about improvement. The committee utilizes the program assessment report review rubric (See Appendix B).
6. ***Ayoo iinii (Accountability)***: Program faculty and Deans, in partnership with the Office of Assessment & Curriculum and the Sihasin Committee, implement any changes identified.

Roles and Responsibilities in Academic Assessment

Academic assessment is an institution-wide endeavor that involves students, faculty, administrators, and staff stakeholders. The role of each and the timeline for their contributions is detailed in the table below.

Who	When	What
Students	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete the designated assessments as assigned.
Faculty in Academic Programs and General Education	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Define and review Program Student Learning Outcomes (PSLOs) • Identify courses and assignments for collecting assessment data related to PSLOs. • Score assignments to collect and analyze assessment data. • Invite the Office of Assessment & Curriculum to work with them as needed. • Utilize Canvas to collect assessment data through designated assignments • Apply standard rubrics in Canvas for assessment scoring • Ensure all course sections use consistent Canvas assessment tools
Faculty in Academic Programs and General Education	Assessment Days	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use assessment findings to plan program changes. • Determine impact of previous programmatic changes on student learning and experiences. • Prepare the program assessment report and submit to the School Dean.
Office of Institutional Planning and Reporting	By April 30 th of each year	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide each program with a profile from the last four academic years (see Appendix C). • Provide each School Dean with their School's Annual Budget Snapshot (see Appendix D).
Deans	Assessment Days	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review program resource needs as stated in completed program assessment report and the School's Fiscal Snapshot (provided by OIPR; see Appendix D) for planning and decision-making. • Review assessment improvement recommendations and implement changes to curriculum. • Approve program assessment reports and submit them to the Office of Assessment and Curriculum.
Deans	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Champion meaningful assessment in their school. • Oversee implementation of assessment plans. • Communicate essential assessment deadlines to their faculty. • Ensure faculty are ready to complete their program assessment reports on Assessment Days.

Who	When	What
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Invite the Office of Assessment and Curriculum to share assessment-related information at School meetings.
Sihasin Committee	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide strategic advice regarding assessment plans, templates, documents and reports. • Communicate assessment office's long-term goals and strategies to faculty and other committees. • Provide feedback on completed program assessment reports and make recommendations for improvement (See Appendix B).
Office of the Provost	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Champion ongoing meaningful assessment in academic programs. • Coordinate workshops and professional development opportunities for faculty through the Office of Assessment and Curriculum. • Communicate assessment activities to external stakeholders such as the Board of Regents and the Higher Learning Commission.
Office of Assessment and Curriculum	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oversee academic assessment and collaborate with co-curricular assessment. • Create and revise assessment processes, timelines, and reporting templates. • Facilitate workshops and professional development for faculty.
Office of Assessment and Curriculum	End of Academic Year	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extract program assessment data from the colleges learning management system, Canvas. • Track program assessment report submissions and relay messages to School Deans. • Produce end-of-cycle reports, including recommendations for assessment improvements.
President	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Utilize assessment information for planning, budgeting, fund-raising, and overall institutional development.
Board of Regents	Annually	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Utilize assessment information to make recommendations for institutional improvement.

Program Assessment in Canvas

Canvas serves as the central platform for collecting and organizing assessment data at Diné College. This standardized approach ensures consistent data collection across all course sections and simplifies the assessment process. The typical workflow for a program assessment in Canvas includes selecting designated assessment courses, identifying an assessment assignment, attaching a rubric/scoring method and curating a collection of artifacts. Once scoring of the artifacts is complete, the Office of Assessment & Curriculum generates reports and shares data with programs. Programs use the data to complete assessment report.

References

- Association of American Colleges and Universities. (2009). *Valid Assessment of Learning in Undergraduate Education (VALUE)*. Author. <https://www.aacu.org/initiatives/value>
- Diné College. (2020). *Institutional Assessment Plan*. <https://www.dinecollege.edu/academics/academic-assessment/#aa-methods>
- Ibid. (2021). *Academic Program Review Guidelines & Criteria*. <https://www.dinecollege.edu/academics/academic-assessment/#aa-methods>
- Higher Learning Commission. (2023). *Diné College Final Report, 4.B – Core Component 4.B*. Higher Learning Commission Diné College Site Visit, Tsale, AZ.

Appendix A: Academic Assessment Reporting Template

Annual Academic Assessment Reporting Template						
Return a completed copy to your School Dean, Director of Assessment, and Assessment Database Administrator						
<i>The information in this reporting template is related to accreditation requirements set forth by the Higher Learning Commission.</i>						
Section 1: Contact and Program Information						
Name/s (Please include all persons completing this report)						
Academic Year covered in this report				<pull-down menu/select one >		
School				<pull-down menu/select one >		
Degree Program				<pull-down menu/select one >		
Degree Type				<pull-down menu/select one >		
Section 2: Assessment Plan						
List <u>all</u> the program-level student learning outcomes (PSLOs). Assess a few PSLOs each year until you have assessed all within a 4-year cycle. You may collect data for each PSLO continuously and assess it on a timeline that works for your program.						
PSLO #	Program-Level Student Learning Outcome (PSLO)	Alignment to Institutional Learning Outcomes	Course(s) where data for assessing the PSLO is gathered	How often is/are the course(s) offered?	Type of assignment or activity used to assess the PSLO	Do you use a rubric to grade the assignment or activity? If you do not use a rubric, how do you gather information about student performance at the PSLO level?
Sample	Students will achieve mastery in storytelling, as demonstrated by relaying a story told by an Elder to their class and discussing how it connects them to their community, land, and food.	Tradition	DSTR 355	Every Spring semester	Oral storytelling and discussion.	VALUE rubric (attached)

1.						
2.						
3.						

Section 3: Analyzing PSLO Data and Making Decisions

Describe the assessment procedures for all PSLOs and their resulting influence on curriculum, teaching, and/or assessment processes. *Programs continuously collect data for each PSLO but may choose to analyze them on a staggered cycle, e.g. every other year. If this is the case in your program, note when you plan to analyze PSLO data (e.g. every other year in AY 2026).*

PSLO #	What is the cycle of PSLO data collection & analysis?	When student scores are averaged across each row of the rubric, what patterns emerged?	What did you learn from the data patterns?	What decisions or actions will the program take because of those findings?	How did your program follow up from assessment decisions or actions during the previous assessment reporting cycle?
Sample	Continuous/ Every other year	Students demonstrated strong expertise across all four elements of the rubric, rated from 1 (novice) to 5 (expert): Dine culture (M=4.3); Self-reflection (M=4.7); Responsibility (M=4.5); and, Wellness (M=4.4).	Data patterns indicate students achieved strong expertise through this assignment.	Because of the strong data pattern, we will continue this assignment and assessment as they stand. We will watch for any data shifts in the future to ensure students continue their strong performance across all elements of the rubric.	Our old PSLO read, "Students will achieve mastery in storytelling." This confused students and faculty. So, we rewrote the PSLO to include "as demonstrated by....." This seemed to clarify the PSLO for students and faculty by identifying how student achievement of this outcome would be observed and measured. Data patterns seem to indicate this was a good decision on our part.
1.					

2.					
3.					
Section 4: Valuable Assessment-Related Activities Related to Academic Program Review					
1. Please describe assessment work your program conducted that was not directly related to assessing PSLOs. This may include things like curriculum mapping, revising an assessment measure, revising PSLOs, incorporating assessment discussions into program meetings, inter-rater reliability studies, rubric norming, market analysis, exploring joint-degree programs, introducing community-service options into the curriculum, etc.					
2. Please describe how the program used insights gained from assessment to integrate non-academic services into student learning. This may include things like inviting the Library, Writing Center, or other co-curricular and student services to conduct workshops in courses; referring students to the Wellness Center; or establishing student internship programs in a non-academic setting.					
3. Please describe how the program used insights gained from assessment to partner with other academic programs, including those at other universities. This may include things like articulation agreements, reverse transfers, joint degrees, collaborations with faculty in other departments to study an issue of interest, organizing professional development activities, collaborating for program development, etc.					
4. Notable program accomplishments, e.g. grants, faculty publications, program proposals, etc.					
Section 5: Communicating and Maintaining PSLOs					
1. When were PSLOs last reviewed by all program faculty?					
2. When and how are PSLOs made available to students (include URL, if available)?					
3. How does the program ensure that PSLOs are linked to course-level learning objectives? How are the linkages communicated to students?					

Section 6: Assessment Materials
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Select all relevant assessment-related items the program has developed. Please share those documents so we may archive them for you.

- ☐ Curriculum Map
- ☐ Student or Program Handbook
- ☐ A program-level conflict-resolution policy for students
- ☐ Direct measures e.g. rubrics, internship supervision evaluation forms, etc.
- ☐ Indirect measures e.g. surveys, student feedback forms, etc.
- ☐ Products from assessment meetings or retreats, e.g. revised assessment plans, documents, measures, or handbooks, etc.
- ☐ Other (please specify): _____

Section 7: Assessment Support

1. What resource needs have your assessment efforts revealed?	Select all that apply: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="radio"/> Facilities <input type="radio"/> Human Capital <input type="radio"/> IT/Software <input type="radio"/> Professional Development <input type="radio"/> Other (please specify): _____
2. Please explain your selections in the previous question.	
3. Please describe your program/unit assessment challenges and how the Office of Assessment can support you.	

Thank you for completing this report.

Appendix B: Academic Assessment Reporting Template Review Rubric

Academic Assessment Reporting Review Rubric					
<i>This is intended as a tool to help assess the status of program assessment efforts as reported in the Annual Assessment Report Template. We hope this tool will serve as a springboard for discussion that will contribute to meaningful assessment in your program.</i>					
	The program:	Yes	Somewhat	No	Comments
1.	Developed clear and measurable program student learning outcomes (PSLOs).				
2.	Aligned PSLOs to ILOs.				
3.	Identified course(s) in which data for assessing each PSLO is gathered.				
4.	Described the frequency of course offerings in which assessment data are gathered.				
5.	Clearly identified the assignment or activity used to assess each PSLO.				
6.	Indicated how each assignment or activity was graded or rated.				
7.	Identified the cycle of each PSLO data collection and analysis.				
8.	Described the data patterns or findings from assessment data analysis for each PSLO analyzed.				
9.	Shared what the program learned from the data patterns for each PSLO analyzed.				
10.	Described decisions or actions it will take because of the findings for each PSLO analyzed.				
11.	Shared how it followed up from assessment decisions or actions during the previous assessment reporting cycle.				
12.	Described assessment activities that were not directly related to assessing PSLOs.				
13.	Described how it used insights gained from assessment to integrate non-academic services into student learning.				
14.	Described how it used insights gained from assessment to partner with other academic programs.				
15.	Shared notable program accomplishments.				
16.	Reported a date or timeline of review of PSLOs by program faculty.				
17.	Identified when and how it makes PSLOs available to students.				
18.	Described how it links course-level learning objectives to PSLOs.				
19.	Described how it shares with students connections between course-level objectives and PSLOs.				
20.	Has developed assessment-related items such as a curriculum map, program handbook, a conflict-resolution policy, direct and/or indirect measures, etc..				
21.	Made clear connections between assessment efforts and its resource needs.				
22.	Overall, the program appears to have implemented a clear assessment process that is sustainable and meaningful to the program.				

General Comments:

Appendix C: Suggested Elements of an OIPR Program Profile

1. Student Fall enrollment trends (reported in aggregate numbers) for the current and previous 4 years broken down by:
 - a. Reported gender
 - b. Reported race/ethnic identity
 - c. Pell-grant recipient – to include work-study
 - d. First-year first-time enrollees and transfer students
 - e. Full-time and Part-time
 - f. Chapter
2. Retention trends: First Year
 - a. Reported gender
 - b. Reported race/ethnic identity
 - c. Pell-grant recipient – to include work-study
 - d. First-year first-time enrollees and transfer students
 - e. Full-time and Part-time
3. Retention trends: Four Years
 - a. Reported gender
 - b. Reported race/ethnic identity
 - c. Pell-grant recipient – to include work-study
 - d. First-year first-time enrollees and transfer students
 - e. Full-time and Part-time
4. Graduation rates (broken down by the same demographics as above)
 - a. 4-year
 - b. 6-year
5. Time to graduation (reported in aggregate numbers) for the previous 6 years (broken down by the same demographics as above).
6. Graduate school – Data to be retrieved by National Clearing House.

Appendix D: Elements of School Annual Budget Snapshot from Human Resources & Finance

1. Total Faculty: Tenured/Tenure-track Full-time Faculty, Non-T/TT Full-time Instructional Faculty, and other Adjunct faculty
 - a. Reported gender
 - b. Reported race/ethnic identity
 - c. Education background
 - d. Rank
2. Total Staff: Full-time and Part-time by
 - a. Reported gender
 - b. Reported race/ethnic identity
 - c. Education background
 - d. Rank
3. Job placement – Dine College employees for Faculty & Students. Population from OIPR to DHR
4. Research and course load
5. Total allocated budget for the Fiscal Year
6. Payroll, min-max salary
7. Core Expenditures
8. Other Expenditures
9. Funding generated

Appendix E: Four Pillars of Institutional Learning Outcomes

1. Tradition – Incorporate Navajo Ways of Life and thinking as successful global citizens.
2. Leadership – Lead with integrity, confidence, compassion, vision and resilience.
3. Knowledge – Display a level of proficiency in their declared field(s) of study and general education; which enables them to successfully pursue professional careers or advance studies and engage in lifelong learning.

4. Skills – Engage in critical thinking and problem-solving skills to make informed decisions. Demonstrate written and oral communication skills.

Four Pillars			
Institutional Learning Outcomes (ILOs)			
(Experience over the course of the entire college experience)			
Knowledge	Skills	Tradition	Leadership
Natural & Physical Sciences	Critical thinking	Navajo Culture	Collaboration
Mathematics	Analytical Reasoning	Responsibility	Teamwork
Humanities	Reading Comprehension	Civic Engagement	Confidence
Social & Behavioral Science	Oral Communication Skills	Navajo Language	Global Perspectives
Fine Arts & Media	Written Comm. Skills	Inclusiveness	Capacity for Cont. Learning
Professionalism	Creative Thinking	Life Long Wellness	Maturity
Diverse/Global Cultures	Ethical Reasoning	Self-Reflection	Civic Engagement
Communicate Effectively	Professional Conduct	Navajo History	Social Responsibility
Technology Literacy	Research Skills		Integration of Learning
	Interpersonal Skills		Adaptability
	Planning/Organization		Application of Knowledge
	Quantitative Reasoning		

KNOWLEDGE	SKILLS	TRADITION	LEADERSHIP
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • STEAM • Fine Arts & Humanities • Tech Literacy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication • Research • Reading • Knowledge Application 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Navajo Way of Life • Dine Educational Paradigm • Responsibility 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maturity • Adaptability • Confidence • Creativity • Inclusiveness