ANNUAL RESEARCH REPORT

ACADEMIC YEAR 2022-2023 (updated 8/12/2024)

I. Introduction

A. Background/History of the Institution

The Ascent College Story (Historical Review)

Ascent College (previously Bethel Bible Institute (BBI)) was founded by Dr. John Mannion in 1996 for the purpose of training missionaries and church leaders. Pastor Ron Johnson, who was a sectional presbyter with the Potomac District, assumed the presidency. By 1997, BBI was approved by the Potomac District of the Assemblies of God as a training institute to provide the educational requirements for credentialing ministers at the certification and licensing level with the Assemblies of God.

In 1998, Rev. Stuart Ross was appointed as director to lead the school for training pastors, evangelists, missionaries, Christian education workers, and lay ministers. Rev. Ross was instrumental in positioning the school for the training of Hampton Master's Commission students and local pastors.

In 2002, Pastor Ron Johnson appointed Dr. Terry Minter as President of Bethel Bible Institute. Pastor Johnson and Dr. Minter envisioned a four-year college and began the transition from a Bible Institute into a college that awards both bachelor and associate degrees. In 2005, Bethel College was incorporated in the Commonwealth of Virginia as a non-profit corporation (501(c)(3) and was certified to operate as an in-state, non-profit college by Virginia. In 2013 Bethel College was granted accreditation by The Association for Biblical Higher Education (ABHE), 5575 S. Semoran Blvd., Suite 26, Orlando, FL 32822-1781, 407-207-0808.

In 2006, Bethel College moved into a new facility with a new library and several new classrooms to be shared with Bethel Temple Church. In May 2017, Dr. Mark Wootton became the third president of Bethel College. In March 2019, Dr. Ron DeBerry was appointed by the board as the Interim President. In November 2019, Dr. Rob Rhoden became the president of Bethel College. Soon afterward the college changed its name to Antioch College of the Assemblies of God and established an increased relationship with the Potomac Ministry Network. The name was changed again to Ascent College. Ascent College officially relocated from Hampton, Virginia to Gainesville, Virginia in June 2023.

Locations

Ascent College is centrally administered in northern Virginia at the Potomac Ministry Center with the main campus at 14525 John Marshall Highway, Gainesville, Virginia 20155. It creates connections with local churches, called Partner Sites, where students experience community, spiritual formation, and practicums, which are practical ministry opportunities to apply learning and Christian service.

Ascent College offers on-campus and hybrid courses at its main campus in Gainesville, Virginia, and at its additional instruction location, Word of Life Church, at 5225 Backlick Road, in Springfield, Virginia 22151.

B. Institutional Mission and Goals 2022-2023 (Intentions)

Ascent College's institutional mission has been summarized in one sentence: *Ascent College is equipping Spirit-empowered ministry leaders to be passionate, principled, and practical leaders through sound Biblical education and leadership development.* (This statement was being revised in 2022-2023.)

Ascent College provides exemplary postsecondary education from a biblical perspective by uniting comprehensive academic learning and practical ministry experience to prepare students spiritually, practically, and academically for professional and lay ministry. Therefore, the college's programs revolve around this aim. Because our focus is training men and women for lay and professional ministry, our educational requirements intentionally reflect a heavy concentration on biblical studies and ministry-related courses. All students, irrespective of the degree plan, are required to take a core of courses related to the Bible and ministry. In addition, both the two-year and four-year programs result in a degree in church ministries, with the four-year degree only offering concentrations in biblical studies, ministerial leadership, missions, and worship and worshipping arts.

The institutional goals for 2022-2023 as displayed in the college catalog for that year **(All goals are being condensed and revised):**

1. Provide a sound biblical, theological, and hermeneutical competence, which prioritizes the authority of the Bible as the inspired Word of God and results in "rightly dividing" the biblical text with a renewal theology emphasis.

2. Provide a general education program that will equip students with the written and oral communication skills necessary to excel both in ministry and professional areas.

3. Provide a general education program that will equip students with quantitative and technological skills; develop a general understanding of natural science, social science, and the humanities from a Christian perspective; and give the students a view of their responsibility as Christian scholars in both the local and global community.

4. Prepare Christian men and women professionally for ministry. Be a leadership development and resource center for Bible believing churches and the community at large.

5. Provide academic support through computer facilities, library resources, and student support services to ensure quality instruction and a challenging academic environment.

6. Provide an environment that supports and encourages students in their personal, social, spiritual, and cultural development.

7. Develop students who are committed to a lifestyle of spiritual growth, fellowship, prayer, worship, and Christian service.

8. Develop students who demonstrate an understanding of a biblical worldview that integrates faith with learning.

9. Prepare students for successful personal and professional life by providing opportunities for them to develop a personal mission statement including Christian core values and ethics that will shape their vocational goals and lifestyle choices.

10. Train students to comprehend and communicate biblical and theological truth, and provide opportunities for students to participate in practical ministry within their respective communities.

11. Assess academic programs, academic support services, and institutional support services in a comprehensive systematic program that fosters continuous improvement.

12. Maintain efficient and effective administrative services and facilities to support all programs of the college.

13. Maintain sound financial management while focusing on programs and services vital to the mission of the college.

14. Optimize resources and generate revenue for programs through partnerships, donors, and grants.

This assessment plan focuses on measuring the college's effectiveness at accomplishing some of these fourteen institutional goals. The program-specific objectives were not measured in this assessment cycle since the college was revising all programs and objectives. The new assessment plan being developed will include an assessment of the new program objectives.

C. Process Employed for Development of the Assessment Plan

Ascent College's original assessment plan ran its five-year cycle from 2007 through 2012. The first year of this initial five-year assessment plan assessed various parameters across the programs and offices to assess some processes that are considered integral for the operation of the college. The measurement tools were used to evaluate these college processes on a routine and repetitive scheme for improved effectiveness. The second through fifth year of this initial assessment plan measured these processes repetitively as well as reviewing the academic programs at the college.

For this iteration of the assessment plan Ascent College focused on continued integration of Populi and WEAVE/Analytics. Ascent College established a team of interested stakeholders to develop these assessment tools intended to enhance quality and efficiency. The team was coordinated by the Executive Vice President of the college.

The assessment plan is divided into a five-year cycle with most goals having data collected and reviewed annually. There is also a longitudinal trend analysis requirement for many of the goals. At the end of each year in the month of June, the college prepares an annual institutional research report which summarizes the assessments during that cycle year with the issues identified and those corrective actions taken and those corrective actions awaiting budget support. Changes considered significant enough to warrant immediate implementation will be placed before the board in their August meeting so that budget adjustments can be made prior to the fall semester. Other recommended changes requiring budget allocations will be included in the proposed budget for the appropriate budget year in which implementation is projected. Refer to Appendix 3 for a schematic of this process.

D. Participants in the Development of the Assessment Plan

The participants include members of the Ascent College staff. This group consists of representatives with education, business, and leadership expertise. The staff who assisted in developing this plan included the Registrar/Admissions Officer, the Student Affairs Officer, the Executive Vice President, and the President. (New assessment criteria are being developed for the revised goals.)

E. Process for Renewal of the Assessment Plan

This assessment plan was envisioned to be a dynamic plan that improves with use. During the cycle years of assessment, each measurement tool will be re-evaluated for effectiveness. If the measurement fails to yield the needed results, the failure will be acknowledged, and new methods will be instituted. Necessary changes to the plan will be developed and implemented annually as needed. In addition, as the college grows in staff and programs, this plan will be refined and redefined to satisfy the growing programs. So, an important component of this plan is the continual reassessment of the plan itself to assure adequacy and improvement.

II. 2022-2023 Assessment

A. Process for 2022-2023 Assessment

Various measurement tools were used throughout the 2022-2023 academic year both in the fall and spring semesters. Some of the data from these measurements was reviewed to determine if the college met the performance indicator in 2022-2023. Some of the measurements were not utilized for various reasons. The results are displayed below with a roll-up of the improvements needed.

Ascent College is undergoing a complete review and revision of the mission statement, the institutional goals and the academic programs with their objectives. This review and revision will necessitate the development of a new Assessment Plan for the college. Therefore, the 2022-2023 Assessment Plan is a very limited assessment which focuses on financial, enrollment and library services

administrative institutional goals and no academic program objectives since these are currently under review and revision.

B. Executive Summary

Ascent College met assessment plan performance indicators in several areas, one important area being spiritual development. However, some areas, such as the ETS Proficiency Profile, have proven less useful. Given that the ETS Proficiency Profile has gone out of business, it will not be used in the future. Also, Edvance360 & Canopy no longer are available. Populi and WEAVE utilization will enable application of measurement tools to enhance future assessment.

Ascent College is mostly meeting its institutional program goals for biblical knowledge as measured by the ABHE Bible Knowledge Exam. For the last three years, the college has implemented the requirement that all diploma, associate, and bachelor graduates meet their respective thresholds for passing the Bible exam at the conclusion of degree programs and it allows the comparison of freshman scores and graduate scores.

Ascent College met or exceeded both its enrollment and fundraising goals, with proactive leadership from the President and effective enrollment management. The college also met its overall retention rate, as it has in prior years. Additionally, innovative and steady student advising efforts are still recommended to continue but would benefit from having refined written standard operating policy. The college needs to develop a task force to improve graduation rates.

One area for improvement is in the realm of alumni and faculty surveys. They were not given in 2022-2023.

This year Noel-Levitz student satisfaction surveys were not utilized; however, student surveys were done for individual classes in the curriculum. Still implementing Noel-Levitz student satisfaction surveys remains a goal for the 2025-2026 academic year

Institutional Goals

INSTITUTIONAL GOALS	Behaviors Indicative of Institutional Goal	MEASUREMENT TOOL	PERFORMANCE INDICATOR	ISSUES/FINDINGS	RECOMMENDATIONS
1. Provide a sound biblical, theological, and hermeneutical competence, which prioritizes the authority of the Bible as the inspired Word of God and results in "rightly dividing" the biblical text with a renewal theology emphasis.	Student has acquired biblical knowledge Student has a biblical worldview	ABHE Biblical Knowledge Test Program Objectives #2, #3, #5 in the Diploma Program as measured in Edvance360 & KanopySIS & KanopySIS learning outcome management tools	No indicator for entry Graduates above national norm 90% of students average 70% or above	Met all graduates were above the national norm Met 93% of Sophomore and Senior students scored above 70%	These tools were no longer available - Need to develop- another assessment tool in new assessment plan

INSTITUTIONAL GOALS	Behaviors Indicative of Institutional Goal	MEASUREMENT TOOL	PERFORMANCE INDICATOR	ISSUES/FINDINGS	RECOMMENDATIONS
6. Provide an environment that supports and encourages students in their personal, social, spiritual, and cultural development.	Student demonstrates growth in social and spiritual development	Spiritual Transformation Inventory Noel-Levitz Student Satisfaction Survey	graduating students demonstrate higher score than freshman group in 80% of the domains Above norm of selected group	Met Not Met Noel-Levitz Not Given	 Noel-Levitz planned for 2026
10. Train students to comprehend and communicate biblical and theological truth, and provide opportunities for students to participate in practical ministry within their respective communities.	Students have participated in practical ministry opportunities	Christian Service, Practicum, and Internship Files	100% have completed	Met	

INSTITUTIONAL GOALS	Behaviors Indicative of Institutional Goal	MEASUREMENT TOOL	PERFORMANCE INDICATOR	ISSUES/FINDINGS	RECOMMENDATIONS
11. Assess academic programs, academic support services, and institutional support services in a comprehensive systematic program that fosters continuous improvement.	College has implemented a comprehensive assessment plan	Institutional Assessment Program	100% completed	Met	We need to develop a new assessment plan, including admin. Also beginning 2023 have new, updated programs with new program objectives.
12. Maintain efficient and effective administrative services and facilities to support all programs of the college.	Students have favorable perceptions of the administrative services and facilities Faculty have favorable perceptions of the administrative services and facilities	Noel-Levitz Student Satisfaction Survey Faculty Survey	Above norm of selected group 85% of faculty surveyed indicate 4 on scale of 5	Not Met Not Met Faculty Survey not completed	Noel-Levitz planned for 2026 Need to revise and implement new Faculty Survey in conjunction with new assessment plan

INSTITUTIONAL GOALS	Behaviors Indicative of Institutional Goal	MEASUREMENT TOOL	PERFORMANCE INDICATOR	ISSUES/FINDINGS	RECOMMENDATIONS
13. Maintain sound financial management while focusing on programs and services vital to the mission of the college.	Financial policies and practices are consistent with industry wide fiscal policies and processes	Audit	No material discrepancies	Met No material discrepancies noted. Audit completed	
14. Optimize resources and generate revenue for and through programs, partnerships, donors, and grants.	Financial resources are sufficient for sustainability	USDE Financial Ratio % of revenue generated from donations and grants	1.5 or above 1% increase annually	Met Met	Ongoing efforts being made in this category. President takes lead. School models giving by commitments to missional engagements

Library Services

INSTITUTIONAL GOAL	FUNCTION	OBJECTIVE	MEASUREMENT TOOL	PERFORMANCE INDICATOR	ISSUES/FINDINGS	RECOMMENDATIONS
Provide academic support through faculty, curriculum, computer facilities, library resources, and student support services to ensure quality instruction and a challenging academic environment	Provides guidance to patrons in the use of collections and electronic resources	Personal guidance demonstrates knowledge that is helpful, effective, and cordial	Library patron survey	4.0 or higher on pertinent question of survey	Not Met Survey not given	Revise Survey to focus on online support during this period of predominantly online under new assessment plan
		Customer service to assist patrons is provided when requested	Library patron survey	4.0 or higher on pertinent question of survey	Not Met Patron survey not given	Develop new Patron Survey under new assessment plan
		Volunteers receive training in basic functions of the library to be prepared to assist patrons	Training post-test	Volunteers pass a training post-test with at least a 90%	Met No new volunteers	
Provide academic support through faculty, curriculum, computer facilities, library resources, and student support services to ensure quality instruction and a challenging academic environment	Maintains and updates book and media collections	Collections are adequate to support curriculum	Statistical Analysis of library collection with regard to number and currency	Percentages of curriculum for each discipline demonstrate adequacy to support curriculum	Not measured this year	Implement in the new assessment plan Also suggest explore Logos for students

INSTITUTIONAL GOAL	FUNCTION	OBJECTIVE	MEASUREMENT TOOL	PERFORMANCE INDICATOR	ISSUES/FINDINGS	RECOMMENDATIONS
Provide academic support through faculty, curriculum, computer facilities, library resources, and student support services to ensure quality instruction and a challenging academic environment	Maintains and updates collections	Collections are adequate to support student needs	Usage Analyses of Library Collection	Usage percentages of resources demonstrate that students are using the resources provided by the library	Not assessed	Assess in new assessment program
			Review of Syllabi to assure assignments are given that would require usage of library resources	75% of syllabi have assignments requiring resources from library	Not assessed	Determine if appropriate measure in new assessment plan

Enrollment Management

ENROLLMENT MANAGEMENT GOALS	PERFORMANCE INDICATOR	MEASUREMENT TOOL	ISSUES/FINDINGS	RECOMMENDATIONS
1. Steadily increase freshman full-time students	5% increase each year	Fall enrollment stats developed for ABHE reports for freshman fulltime students	Met	
2. Steadily increase FTEs	5% increase each year	Fall enrollment stats developed for ABHE reports for FTEs	Met	
3. Retain degreed students	Maintain a total retention rate of 70% or higher for degree-seeking students Maintain a Graduation Rate Student (GRS) cohort 70% or higher	College specific data collected Data collected for IPEDS report	Met Not Met 18% Graduation rates over the last 5 years: 2018 – 66% 2019 – 100% 2020 – 50% 2021 – 100% 2022 – 17% Because of our small population sizes, this measure varies widely year from year.	 Need to develop a task force to review these findings and graduation rates to seek improvement

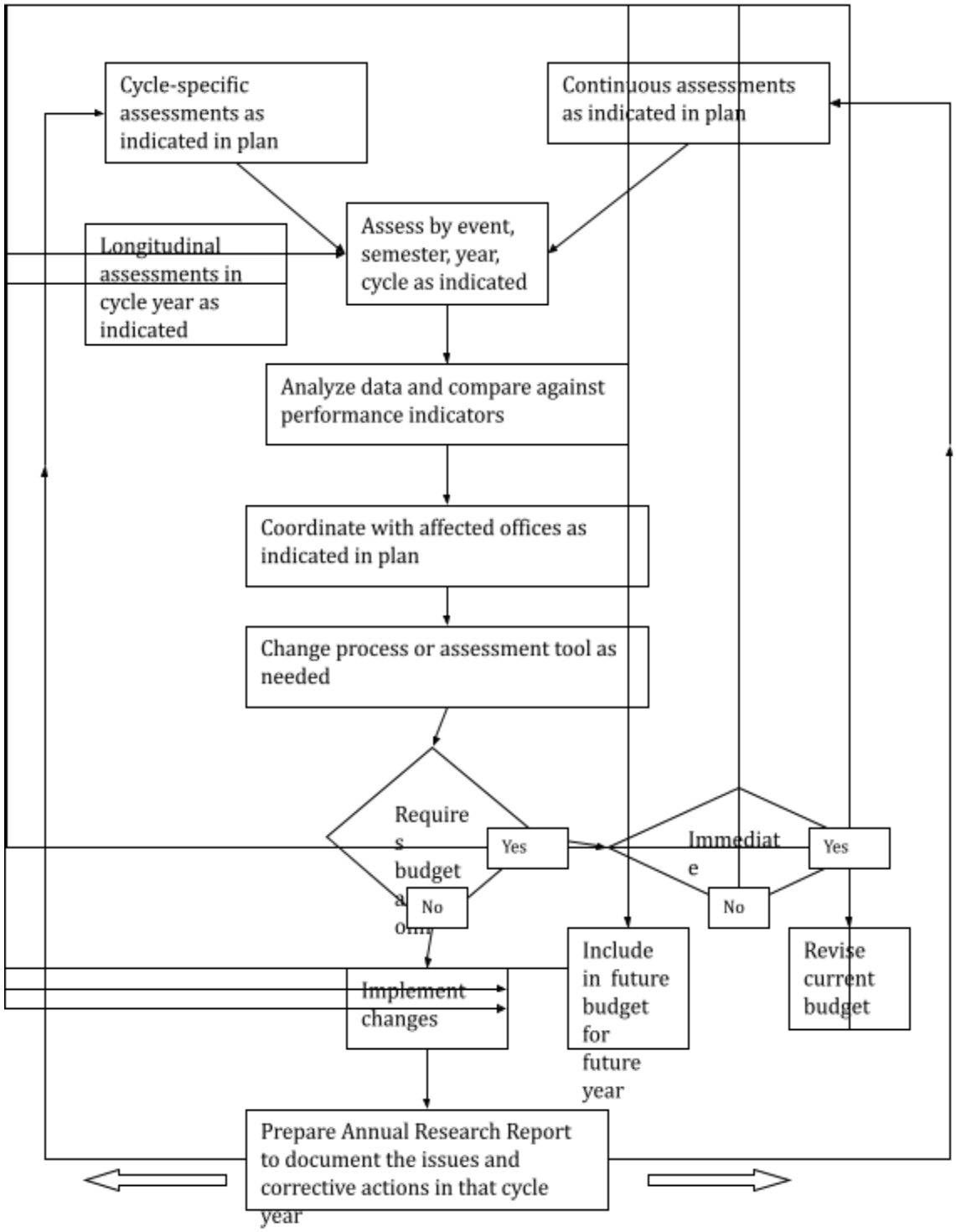
*No academic program assessments were accomplished in AY2022-2023 since the college was beginning the process of revising its mission statement and all academic programs and objectives.

Appendix 1 – Action Tasks

Improve Retention Rates				
For Students Having Academic Issues				
Action Steps	**Resource Requirements**	**Focus of Responsibility**	**Deadline**	**Remarks**
Evaluate current admission policy to assure students who do not have the college level skills are provided remedial courses	10 hr	Academic Dean	1/4/2023	Admission policies are adequate with entrance exams
Revise aggressive advising policy as needed	10 hr	Academic Dean	1/4/2023	Current advising practice needs monitor academic issues aggressively – may need to write this practice in policy
Emphasize faculty involvement to assist at-risk students	10 hr	Academic Dean	1/4/2023	Done in Faculty Meeting
For Students Having Life Situation Issues				
Action Steps	**Resource Requirements**	**Focus of Responsibility**	**Deadline**	**Remarks**
Prepare policy to utilize college chaplain and college counseling to engage at-risk students	40 hr	College Chaplain	12/4/2022	College Chaplain is currently engaged with at-risk students

Improve Library Resources				
Action Steps	**Resource Requirements**	**Focus of Responsibility**	**Deadline**	**Remarks**
Update library resources in the areas of Children's Ministry, Youth Ministry, Worship, and Psychology/Counseling as funds become available.	100 hrs…$$$ to be determined	Library Director	3/1/2023 – include some funding in FY2023-2024 Budget	On-going to be reviewed in new assessment plan
Strategize on ways to improve usage of electronic resources and implement	40 hr	Library Director	1/4/2023	On-going to be reviewed in new assessment plan
Improve Assessment Tools				
Develop New Five-Year Assessment Plan				
Action Steps	**Resource Requirements**	**Focus of Responsibility**	**Deadline**	**Remarks**
Provide training in assessment planning to the new Chief Academic Officer	30 hr	Academic Dean	11/30/2022	WEAVE and ABHE Training Done
Standup committee of stakeholders to develop the new five-year assessment plan.	10 hr	VP Institutional Effectiveness	12/1/2022	VP coordinated and selected group with target meetings.

Develop new Five-Year Assessment Plan	300 hr $ to be determined	VP Institutional Effectiveness/Assessment Committee	5/1/2023	In Process
Other Actions for Assessment Plan				
Action Steps	**Resource Requirements**	**Focus of Responsibility**	**Deadline**	**Remarks**
Delete Practicum Program from Diploma program since no practicums are required in the updated Diploma program	2 hr	VP Institutional Effectiveness/Assessment Committee	5/1/2023	Completed
Develop a replacement measurement tool for biblical worldview	25 hrs	VP Institutional Effectiveness/Assessment Committee	5/1/2023	In Process – being integrated into new assessment plan
Develop a replacement measurement tool for program objectives in all new programs and concentrations	40 hr..$ to be determined	VP Institutional Effectiveness/Assessment Committee	5/1/2023	In Process – being integrated into new assessment plan
Develop assessment program for Christian Counseling concentration	40 hr..$ to be determined	VP Institutional Effectiveness/Assessment Committee	5/1/2023	In Process - – being integrated into new assessment plan
Revise Alumni Survey to add question about how well-prepared graduates are for graduate school	1 hr	VP Institutional Effectiveness/Assessment Committee	5/1/2023	In Process -– being integrated into new assessment plan
Assure Faculty Survey is given in 2024-2025 cycle	10 hr	VP Institutional Effectiveness/Assessment Committee	5/1/2023	Assessment Officer – in process with new assessment plan

Revise the Library Patron Survey to include online learning resources	20 hr	VP Institutional Effectiveness/Assessment Committee	5/1/2023	Assessment Officer – in process with new assessment plan
Revise Graduate Survey to include question dealing with Christian character is included for Diploma graduates		VP Institutional Effectiveness/Assessment Committee	5/1/2023	In Process
Delete the measurement tool meeting AG educational requirements for credentialing in all programs since we no longer offer all the courses necessary		VP Institutional Effectiveness/Assessment Committee	5/1/2023	Done
Develop procedures to assure the entrance and exit exams are completed		VP Institutional Effectiveness/Assessment Committee	5/1/2023	In Process with new assessment plan

Appendix 3– Schematic Diagram of Assessment Process