

Veritas Baptist College

Institutional Assessment  
Plan 2021-2023

This Assessment Plan is a strategic and systematic process for improving the quality of student learning at Veritas Baptist College. The Plan touches primarily on Student Learning but also addresses Student Services and Administrative Offices. The Plan is dynamic and fluid, predicated on the College's mission, philosophy, outcomes, and strategic plan. Its audience includes all stakeholders - both directly and indirectly linked to the College. As a private, nonprofit institution of biblical higher education, Veritas Baptist College aims to address the question, "How effectively do we train for the work of the ministry?"

The *Institutional Assessment Planning Guide* (IAPG) identifies four specific areas of institutional assessment and the instruments used within each to identify strengths and weaknesses of the institution and to inform decision makers as they plan for the future. The five *core institutional instruments* listed are broad surveys that touch on all areas of institutional assessment. The IAPG includes an assessment schedule for planning purposes.

| Area of Assessment             | Assessment Process   | Assessment Schedule |
|--------------------------------|--|---------------------|
| Core Institutional Instruments | Entering Student Inventory (ESI)   | Fall                |
|                                | Faculty Satisfaction Inventory (FSI)                                       | Spring              |
|                                | Student Experience Inventory (SEI)   | Spring              |
|                                | Graduating Student Inventory (GSI)   | Spring              |
|                                | Alumni Inventory (AI)  | Summer              |
| Organizational Assessment      | Board of Directors Self-Evaluation   | Summer              |
|                                | Evaluation of Foundational Standards and Institutional Mission and Purpose | Fall                |
|                                | Evaluation of the President  | Spring              |
|                                | Staff and Administration Self-Evaluations                                  | Spring              |
|                                | Staff and Administration Supervisor Evaluations                            | Spring              |
|                                | Evaluation of Policies and Publications                                    | Spring              |
|                                | Evaluation of Key Offices (Admissions, Advising, Financial Aid, Finances)  | Summer              |
| Academic Assessment            | Full-time Faculty Evaluation by Dean                                       | Spring              |
|                                | Adjunct Faculty Evaluation   | Fall/Spring         |
|                                | Student Learning Outcomes (Course level)                                   | Each Semester       |

|                             |  |                    |
|-----------------------------|--|--------------------|
|                             | Curriculum Review  | Yearly Rotation    |
|                             | Program Learning Outcomes (PLO) Summary  | Yearly Rotation    |
|                             | Course Evaluation - Student  | Each Semester      |
|                             | Exit Report for Student Teachers   | Each Semester      |
|                             | Pastor's Evaluation of VBC Graduate  | Spring             |
|                             | Department Chair Review by Faculty   | Spring             |
|                             | Faculty Peer Review  | Fall               |
|                             | Student Risk Assessment  | Summer/Fall/Spring |
|                             |  |                    |
| Learning Resources          | Student Library Survey   | Spring             |
|                             | Faculty Evaluation of Library Holdings (rotating in conjunction with curriculum reviews)                 | Summer             |
|                             |  |                    |
| Institutional Effectiveness | Student Success and Retention Summary  | Fall               |
|                             | Evaluation of Strategic Planning Process   | Spring             |
|                             | Strategic Plan Update  | Spring             |
|                             | Unduplicated Headcount   | Spring             |
|                             | SWOT Analysis (rotating focus groups – administration and board, faculty and staff, students and alumni) | Spring             |
|                             | Program Enrollment Report  | Fall               |
|                             | Enrollment Report  | Each Semester      |
|                             |  |                    |

## **Organizational Assessment**

These instruments are designed to identify areas of strength within the administration of the institution and to also alert the institution to areas that may need attention. They are both preventative and proactive in their design.

### **Board of Directors' Self-Evaluation**

Delivered online to the Board of Directors each summer, this evaluation calls upon board members to evaluate both the overall effectiveness of the board and their personal involvement. The results of this evaluation are reviewed by the Chairman of the Board and the College President before being discussed with the board members if action is needed.

### **Evaluation of Institutional Mission and Purpose**

Delivered electronically to the Board of Directors each fall and provided as a hard copy at the fall meeting, board members are tasked with reviewing the institutional mission and purpose as it relates to the curriculum to ensure that the three remain aligned and that the relationship is strong.

### **Evaluation of the President**

Delivered electronically to the Board of Directors each spring, this survey evaluates the effectiveness of the College President. The Chairman of the Board meets with the President to discuss the results.

### **Staff and Administration Self-Evaluations / Supervisor Evaluations**

Delivered electronically, all staff and administrators evaluate their own performance. They then send their self-evaluations to their supervisors who then meet with them to discuss both their personal assessment and their supervisor's assessment, addressing any concerns, giving commendations when appropriate, and setting goals for the upcoming year.

### **Evaluation of Policies and Publications**

The Administrative Cabinet meets each winter to suggest updates to policies and publications based on their personal reviews and relevant data from other assessment tools. Suggested updates are then sent to the Board of Directors electronically in the spring. Upon approval, revisions are included in the publications for following school year. Reviewed publications include *College Catalog*, *Faculty Manual*, *Student Handbook*, *Financial Aid Handbook*, *Institutional Assessment*, *Strategic Plan*, and *Policies Handbook*.

### **Evaluation of Key Offices**

Delivered online, key offices complete an evaluation based on the objectives that they publish for their departments. Results are shared with the President and Administrative Cabinet before being discussed with the Board members if action is needed.

### **Academic Assessment**

These academic assessment instruments are based on the American Association of Higher Education's Nine Principles of Good Practice for Assessing Student Learning (1997). Combined, the results of these instruments are used to update programs and improve instruction with the ultimate result of enhancing student learning and increasing positive student outcomes.

#### *NINE PRINCIPLES OF GOOD PRACTICE FOR ASSESSING STUDENT LEARNING*

- 1. The assessment of student learning begins with educational values.** Assessment is not an end in itself but rather a vehicle for educational improvement. Its effective practice, then, begins with and enacts a vision of the kinds of learning we most value for students and strive to help them achieve. Educational values should drive not only what we choose to assess but also how we do so. Where questions about educational mission and values are skipped over, assessment threatens to be an exercise in measuring what's easy, rather than a process of improving what we really care about.
- 2. Assessment is most effective when it reflects an understanding of learning as multidimensional, integrated, and revealed in performance**

**over time.** Learning is a complex process. It entails not only what students know but what they can do with what they know; it involves not only knowledge and abilities but values, attitudes, and habits of mind that affect both academic success and performance beyond the classroom. Assessment should reflect these understandings by employing a diverse array of methods including those that call for actual performance, using them over time so as to reveal change, growth, and increasing degrees of integration. Such an approach aims for a more complete and accurate picture of learning, and therefore firmer bases for improving our students' educational experience.

**3. Assessment works best when the programs it seeks to improve have clear, explicitly stated purposes.** Assessment is a goal-oriented process. It entails comparing educational performance with educational purposes and expectations—these derived from the institution's mission, from faculty intentions in program and course design, and from knowledge of students' own goals. Where program purposes lack specificity or agreement, assessment as a process pushes a campus toward clarity about where to aim and what standards to apply; assessment also prompts attention to where and how program goals will be taught and learned. Clear, shared, implementable goals are the cornerstone for assessment that is focused and useful.

**4. Assessment requires attention to outcomes but also and equally to the experiences that lead to those outcomes.** Information about outcomes is of high importance; where students "end up" matters greatly. But to improve outcomes, we need to know about student experience along the way—about the curricula, teaching, and kind of student effort that lead to particular outcomes. Assessment can help understand which students learn best under what conditions; with such knowledge comes the capacity to improve the whole of their learning.

**5. Assessment works best when it is ongoing, not episodic.** Assessment is a process whose power is cumulative. Though isolated, "one-shot" assessment can be better than none, improvement is best fostered when

assessment entails a linked series of activities undertaken over time. This may mean tracking the progress of individual students, or of cohorts of students; it may mean collecting the same examples of student performance or using the same instrument semester after semester. The point is to monitor progress toward intended goals in a spirit of continuous improvement. Along the way, the assessment process itself should be evaluated and refined in light of emerging insights.

**6. Assessment fosters wider improvement when representatives from across the educational community are involved.** Student learning is a campus-wide responsibility, and assessment is a way of enacting that responsibility. Thus, while assessment efforts may start small, the aim over time is to involve people from across the educational community. Faculty play an especially important role, but assessment's questions can't be fully addressed without participation by student-affairs educators, librarians, administrators, and students. Assessment may also involve individuals from beyond the campus (alumni/ae, trustees, employers) whose experience can enrich the sense of appropriate aims and standards for learning. Thus, understood, assessment is not a task for small groups of experts but a collaborative activity; its aim is wider, better-informed attention to student learning by all parties with a stake in its improvement.

**7. Assessment makes a difference when it begins with issues of use and illuminates questions that people really care about.** Assessment recognizes the value of information in the process of improvement. But to be useful, information must be connected to issues or questions that people really care about. This implies assessment approaches that produce evidence that relevant parties will find credible, suggestive, and applicable to decisions that need to be made. It means thinking in advance about how the information will be used, and by whom. The point of assessment is not to gather data and return "results"; it is a process that starts with the questions of decision-makers, that involves them in the gathering and interpreting of data, and that informs and helps guide continuous improvement.

**8. Assessment is most likely to lead to improvement when it is part of a larger set of conditions that promote change.** Assessment alone changes little. Its greatest contribution comes on campuses where the quality of teaching and learning is visibly valued and worked at. On such campuses, the push to improve educational performance is a visible and primary goal of leadership; improving the quality of undergraduate education is central to the institution's planning, budgeting, and personnel decisions. On such campuses, information about learning outcomes is seen as an integral part of decision making, and avidly sought.

**9. Through assessment, educators meet responsibilities to students and to the public.** There is compelling public stake in education. As educators, we have a responsibility to the publics that support or depend on us to provide information about the ways in which our students meet goals and expectations. But that responsibility goes beyond the reporting of such information; our deeper obligation-to ourselves, our students, and society-is to improve. Those to whom educators are accountable have a corresponding obligation to support such attempts at improvement.

American Association for Higher Education. (1997). *Nine Principles of Good Practice for Assessing Student Learning*.

Retrieved Sept. 10, 2016, <http://www.learningoutcomesassessment.org/PrinciplesofAssessment.html>

### **Full-time Faculty Evaluation**

Each spring, the Academic Dean is tasked with evaluating the full-time faculty each semester via an online instrument. After watching a recorded session of the class and reviewing the activity on the course page, including, but not limited to the instructor's activity on the discussion board and the timeliness of grading assignments, he records his findings and then sets up a time to meet with the faculty member to discuss his findings if a meeting is warranted.

### **Adjunct Faculty Evaluation**

Each fall and spring semester, the Department Chair is tasked with evaluating the adjunct faculty via an online instrument. After watching a recorded session of the class and reviewing the activity on the course page, including, but not limited to the instructor's activity on the discussion board and the timeliness of grading assignments, he records his findings and then sets up a time to meet with the faculty member to discuss his findings if a meeting is warranted.

### **Student Learning Outcomes (Course Level)**

At the beginning of each semester, instructors fill out a Student Learning Outcome worksheet which lists the outcomes for the course, the expected standard of performance, and the rationale for that expectation. At the close of the semester, the instructor then adds the actual performance score and comments concerning any changes that low or unusually high scores would suggest need to made. The SLOs are reviewed by the department chair and the Academic Dean.

### **Curriculum Review**

Each major program undergoes a curriculum review every 3-4 years. The average time for the review is once every four years; however, a department may request to complete a review sooner if it is warranted. No review takes place before the matriculation of a class. This review evaluates program standards much like the Student Learning Outcomes evaluate course standards. The review also benchmarks with other institutions that offer similar programs. Faculty and library resources receive attention in this review as well. The outcome of the review may result in the addition or deletion of courses and/or concentrations, the addition of faculty, and the selection/deselection of library resources. Faculty, department chairs, and the Academic Dean participate in these reviews. Results and recommendations are then presented to the Administrative Cabinet for further discussion or for approval to move forward with a new program which will then become part of the Strategic Plan.

### **Course Evaluation - Student**

Students are required to complete an anonymous survey for each course at the end of each semester. The students evaluate the instructor's organization of the class and communication. Students are then asked to respond to a statement concerning each of the course outcomes indicating that upon completion of the course the feel well-prepared, somewhat prepared, or not prepared at all in each area. Results of the evaluation are available to the instructors as soon as 60% of the students in the class have completed it. Results are also reviewed by the department chairs and the Academic Dean.

### **Exit Report for Student Teachers**

Student teachers are required to report on their student-teaching experience at the close of the nine-week internship. This report helps us to evaluate that the experience we are expecting our students to get at various schools meets our expectations. The education department chair reviews these to see if adjustments need to be made to the internship or if further clarification needs to be given to the cooperating schools.

### **Pastor's Evaluation of VBC Graduate**

Evaluating the spiritual development of students is difficult to complete objectively. However, the Bible does tell us that the "fruits" of a man's life is a good indication of that development (Matthew 7:16-20), and the individual that we believe can provide the most objective evaluation of these "fruits" is the student's pastor. Upon completion of a degree program, the college contacts the pastors of each graduate and requests that they fill out an online evaluation for these purposes. The evaluation asks the pastor to indicate the degree to which the students exhibits eight different traits or abilities. The final question asks the pastor to indicate to what extent he feels that the students time at Virginia Baptist College contributed to his spiritual growth. The results of this survey are reviewed by the Administrative Cabinet.

### **Department Chair Review by Faculty**

Every two years, faculty are asked to evaluate their respective department chairs. Areas of evaluation include communication, leadership, and faculty development. Results of the survey are reviewed by the Academic Dean and are then shared with the department chairs.

### **Student Risk Assessment**

The Risk Assessment for first-time students looks at high school transcripts or college transcripts, information from the application, and the English entrance exam when required to identify at-risk students and to provide them sufficient support and counseling for registration throughout the school year. Current students are also assessed at the end of each semester. Students with a GPA below 2.5 may be limited in the number of credits that they can register for in a semester.

## **Learning Resources**

These instruments are designed to identify the level of support that is being offered by the Grafton Library - both at the physical location and holdings and also through the digital resources. They are both preventative and proactive in their design. The Student Experience and Faculty Satisfaction surveys (both external) provide additional insight into the overall library experience.

### **Student Library Survey**

This survey is sent out to students each spring. The survey focuses on the overall level of service they have received and provides a formal way for students to request additional resources.

### **Faculty Review of Holdings**

As part of the curriculum reviews, faculty are asked to help with the selection/deselection process for resources that are traditionally accessed within their departments. Faculty also review the list of digital resources available. This review provides a formal way for faculty to request additional resources for their department.

### **Digital Resource Report**

This report is run each spring and provided to the department chairs and faculty members for review. This provides an opportunity for faculty to become reacquainted with the resources available and to also request additional resources outside of the formal curriculum review rotation.

## **Institutional Effectiveness**

The instruments used for Institutional Effectiveness look at the big picture. From enrollment to future plans, the findings of these instruments are become a compass, pointing the college in the right direction and assuring that we continue on a forward movement.

### **Student Success and Retention Summary**

Updated each semester, this summary provides ongoing retention information. It also includes a report of the progress of students who were placed on Academic Warning, Probation, or Suspension. Outcomes from mid-term grade reporting are also included. Academic Advising is the main department that views these reports and then provides needed information to the Administrative Cabinet.

### **Evaluation of Strategic Planning Progress**

Each spring the Strategic Planning Team meets to review the progress of the current initiatives. It is at this time that the process itself is reviewed, new members are added, and training is provided. A report of the progress is provided to the Administrative Cabinet and to the Board of Directors.

### **Strategic Plan Update**

Based on the results of the spring meeting, the planning team moves forward gathering data from various sources in order to update the Strategic Plan. These updates may include changing the implementation/progress dates of current projects and/or the addition of new initiatives. Once approved by the Planning Team, the proposal is reviewed by the Board of Directors for final approval and publication in the fall BOD meeting.

### **SWOT Analysis**

Each spring a SWOT is completed by a different group of stakeholders (Board members, administration, students, faculty, alumni, public). The results of this analysis are studied by the Administrative Cabinet. This is an important document in the consideration of future initiatives. It also provides a good snapshot of the impression that stakeholders have of the institution.

### **Enrollment Report**

The enrollment report is updated each semester following drop/add. The report tracks percentages of growth by both headcount and FTE for the semester and the year. The number of new students to the institution is included in this report. The administrative cabinet is updated through the registration period on the counts, and the final counts are provided to the Board of Directors at their bi-annual meetings.

### **Unduplicated Head Count**

The unduplicated head count report is completed each spring following the drop/add period for Module B of graduate classes. The administrative cabinet is the Board of Directors receive this report.

### **Program Enrollment Report**

This report is completed each spring and is used by the Administrative Cabinet for planning purposes. Results of this report are useful to the promotions department as well as to the individual departments as they plan for the upcoming years and strategically plan for the adoption and/or the closing of programs.