

**PROPOSED CHANGE OF PROGRAM APPROVAL STATUS BASED ON
 2008 NCLEX-PN® EXAMINATION PASS RATE AND REPORT OF SURVEY VISIT
 ST. MICHAEL'S SCHOOL OF NURSING AND TECHNOLOGY IN WESLACO, TEXAS
 VOCATIONAL NURSING EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM**

SUMMARY OF REQUEST:

Consider change of the Initial approval status of St. Michael's School of Nursing and Technology Vocational Nursing Educational Program in Weslaco, Texas based on the 2008 NCLEX-PN® Examination Pass Rate and report of the survey visit conducted by Texas Board of Nursing (BON) staff on August 25, 2009.

HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE:

Year	Approval Status	NCLEX-PN® Pass Rate	Number of First-Time Candidates (Passed/Total)
2008	Initial	58.33%	7/12
2009 Preliminary Results through 09/30/09	Initial	28.57%	4/14

- On July 19, 2007, St. Michael's School of Nursing and Technology was approved by the Texas BON to begin operation of a vocational nursing (VN) educational program in Weslaco, Texas.
- The program enrolled an initial cohort of thirteen (13) students and these thirteen (13) students graduated from the program in October 2008.
- The program enrolled a second cohort and a third cohort of fifteen (15) students each; the second cohort graduated on April 2, 2009 and the third cohort is scheduled to graduate on November 5, 2009.
- On November 19-20, 2008, BON staff conducted a focused survey visit to evaluate the program's status regarding compliance with the Texas BON rules and regulations in regard to the program's initial approval status.
- At the time of the November 19-20, 2008 survey visit, three (3) of the twelve (12) graduates had taken the NCLEX-PN® examination and all three (3) had passed the examination. Through December 31, 2008, twelve (12) of the thirteen (13) graduates have taken the NCLEX-PN® examination. Seven (7) of the twelve (12) candidates passed the examination and five (5) failed. Therefore, the 2008 NCLEX-PN® pass rate was 58.33%.
- In January 2009, the program initiated a night (5 p.m. to 10 p.m., Monday through Thursday) program that is designed to be completed in seventeen (17) months and two (2) weeks. Two (2) night cohorts were enrolled, with the first night cohort comprised of sixteen (16) students scheduled to graduate in June 2010 and the second night cohort, fourteen (14) students, scheduled to graduate in November 2010.
- At the January 2009 quarterly Board meeting, the Board approved continuation of the initial approval status of St. Michael's School of Nursing and Technology and issued two (2) commendations, four (4) recommendations, and three (3) requirements.
- The three (3) requirements mandated that the VN program director and the VN faculty: (1) develop/revise current student policies related to unprofessional conduct, dismissal from the program,

and readmission to the program that clearly reflect the intent of the Texas Nursing Practice Act and the Texas BON rules and regulations in regard to patient safety and unprofessional conduct as outlined in Rule 214.8(e)(1-4); (2) revise course requirements/assignments to eliminate those activities/assignments that are not part of the scope of practice for licensed vocational nurses in Texas and revise the syllabi for the Fundamentals and Personal Development courses to include specific mention of the Texas Nursing Practice Act and the Texas BON rules and regulations, including the Texas Standards of Nursing Practice, in the course objectives and content outline; and (3) develop specific criteria to use in the selection of new affiliating agencies/clinical facilities or clinical practice settings that address safety and the need for students to achieve the program outcomes (goals) and course objectives through the practice of nursing care or observational experiences taking into consideration those areas outlined in the rule.

- In May 2009, the current VN program director was appointed to the director position. The VN program director has the qualifications required by the rule and has served as faculty at the school since August 2008.
- As required by Rule 214.4(c)(2)(B), Approval, St. Michael's School of Nursing and Technology VN Program was instructed to complete a Self Study report related to the 2008 NCLEX-PN® examination pass rate of 58.33% in order to evaluate factors that contributed to the graduates' performance on the NCLEX-PN® examination and include in the report a description of the corrective measures to be implemented.
- The NCLEX-PN® pass rate for January 1, 2009 through August 25, 2009 (date of survey visit) was 28.57% for first-time test takers. Four (4) of the fourteen (14) graduates/candidates passed the examination and ten (10) failed.
- The Self Study Report was presented to Board staff at the time of the survey visit and provided a thorough overview of proposed changes to the program of study.
- Board staff have entertained multiple student complaints regarding the program, faculty, and administration. The majority of the complaints addressed financial issues, as well as faculty/student communication issues.
- Subsequent to historical data, there is concern that the fifty-five (55) students currently enrolled in the program of study will be able to demonstrate successful outcomes on the NCLEX-PN®. Student enrollment, as of October 1, 2009, is divided among the following four (4) cohorts:
(1) Cohort 1 (Day) is comprised of 13 students scheduled to graduate in November 2009;
(2) Cohort 2 (Day) is comprised of 12 students scheduled to graduate in May 2010;
(3) Cohort 3 (Night) is comprised of 16 students scheduled to graduate in June 2010; and
(4) Cohort 4 (Night) is comprised of 14 students scheduled to graduate in November 2010.

PROS AND CONS:

Pros-

- The August 25, 2009 survey visit revealed the following significant positive findings (See Attachment One):
 - The administration has provided ongoing support of the vocational nursing educational program in a period of transition as there is a new nursing program director and new faculty members.
 - The program director and VN faculty are dedicated to ensure the success of the program as demonstrated by the timely development of the Self Study plan of action in response to Board requirements.
 - Faculty are available from 8:00 a.m. until 10:00 p.m., Monday through Thursday. In addition, faculty are available from 8:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. every Friday to tutor any student requesting assistance.
 - Students articulated appreciation for the ongoing diligence of the program director and faculty to implement changes to the program of study to ensure learner success.
 - Students expressed gratitude for the opportunity to attend a vocational nursing educational program in their local community, the Rio Grande Valley.
 - The school revised admission policies so that more highly qualified applicants will be accepted. The entrance test will be the Assessment Technologies Institute (ATI) examination with a required score of 85%. The Advisory Council will interview all candidates meeting the

admission requirements and follow formatted questionnaires for making final selection of students.

- In May 2009, Region I staff presented training to faculty regarding successful teaching strategies designed to improve learner outcomes.
- In June 2009, course passing grades were changed from 75% to 80% to ensure that students possess, as well as demonstrate, comprehension of course content.
- In September 2009, a professional nursing education consultant was hired to develop and operationalize ongoing corrective measures.
- A two-day NCLEX-PN® preparatory course is scheduled for October 12-13, 2009. The course will be conducted to reinforce student ability to apply testing strategies when taking the NCLEX-PN®.
- ATI examinations will be administered following completion of identified courses with appropriate and timely remedial education provided for students with identified areas for improvement.
- Exit examinations will be required at the end of the nursing program of study prior to students taking the licensure examination.

Cons-

- The August 25, 2009 survey visit revealed the following areas of concern (See Attachment One):
 - The nursing program administration and director have not articulated the required director autonomy specific to nursing educational programs.
- Preliminary results for the program's 2009 pass rate show an NCLEX-PN® pass rate of 28.57%.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Move to change the Initial approval status of St. Michael's School of Nursing and Technology Vocational Nursing Educational Program to Initial with Warning, based on the 2008 NCLEX-PN® Examination Pass Rates and report of the survey visit conducted by BON staff, accept the report of the survey visit, and issue the commendations and requirements to be met based on staff recommendation, as indicated in the attached letter (See Attachment Two).

**SURVEY VISIT
SUMMARY REPORT**

NAME OF NURSING PROGRAM: St. Michael's School of Nursing and Technology Vocational Nursing Educational Program

NURSING PROGRAM DIRECTOR: Mario Garza, RN

REASON FOR SURVEY VISIT: To conduct a focused survey visit subsequent to the program's low pass rates on the 2008 NCLEX-PN® examination.

DATE(S) OF SURVEY VISIT: August 25, 2009

SURVEY VISITOR(S): Virginia Ayars, MS, RN and Paul Waller, PhD, RN

TEXAS BOARD OF NURSING (BON) APPROVAL STATUS: Initial

DATE OF LAST BON SURVEY VISIT: November 19-20, 2008

NAME OF ACCREDITING AGENCIES: No accreditation. Licensed by the Texas Workforce Commission.

ACTIVITIES DURING SURVEY VISIT:

Board staff:

- met with the School Owners and Administrator;
- interviewed Mario Garza, RN, Program Director;
- interviewed nursing students and nursing faculty;
- toured the building;
- reviewed records and documents; and
- conducted a survey conference with the School Administrators and the Program Director.

SURVEY VISIT FINDINGS:

Positive findings revealed during the August 25, 2009 survey visit include:

- The administration has provided ongoing support of the vocational nursing educational program in a period of transition as there is a new nursing program director and new faculty members.
- The program director and VN faculty are dedicated to ensure the success of the program as demonstrated by the timely development of the Self Study plan of action in response to Board requirements.
- Faculty are available from 8:00 a.m. until 10:00 p.m., Monday through Thursday. In addition, faculty are available from 8:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. every Friday to tutor any student requesting assistance.
- Students articulated appreciation for the ongoing diligence of the program director and faculty to implement changes to the program of study to ensure learner success.
- Students expressed gratitude for the opportunity to attend a vocational nursing educational program in their local community, the Rio Grande Valley.
- The school revised admission policies so that more highly qualified applicants will be accepted. The entrance test will be the Assessment Technologies Institute (ATI) examination with a required score of 85%. The Advisory Council will interview all candidates meeting the admission requirements and follow formatted questionnaires for making final selection of students.
- In May 2009, Region I staff presented training to faculty regarding successful teaching strategies designed to improve learner outcomes.

- In June 2009, course passing grades were changed from 75% to 80% to ensure that students possess, as well as demonstrate, comprehension of course content.
- In September 2009, a professional nursing education consultant was hired to develop and operationalize ongoing corrective measures.
- A two-day NCLEX-PN® preparatory course is scheduled for October 12-13, 2009. The course will be conducted to reinforce student ability to apply testing strategies when taking the NCLEX-PN®.
- ATI examinations will be administered following completion of identified courses with appropriate and timely remedial education provided for students with identified areas for improvement.
- Exit examinations will be required at the end of the nursing program of study prior to students taking the licensure examination.

Areas of concern revealed during the survey visit include:

- The nursing program administration and director have not articulated the required director autonomy specific to nursing educational programs.
- Preliminary results for the program's 2009 pass rate show an NCLEX-PN® pass rate of 28.57%.

PROPOSED COMMENDATIONS:

- Commend the administration for their ongoing support of the vocational nursing educational program in this period of transition.
- Commend the program director and faculty for their dedication to ensure the success of the program.

PROPOSED REQUIREMENTS:

- The program director shall submit monthly progress reports to the Texas BON, including students' grades, standardized test scores, and clinical performance evaluations. The first monthly monitoring report is due by December 5, 2009.
- The program director shall provide an evaluation of the implementation of effectiveness of corrective measures to the Texas BON by April 1, 2010.
- The program director shall be required to submit to the Texas BON examples of minutes that reflect the director has full authority for the program of study by April 1, 2010.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Accept the survey visit report, and issue the commendations and requirements to be met as indicated in the attached letter (See Attachment Two).

DRAFT LETTER

October 26, 2009

Mario Garza, RN
Director, Vocational Nursing Educational Program
St. Michael's School of Nursing and Technology
3001 North Westgate
Weslaco, Texas 78596

Dear Mr. Garza:

At the October 22-23, 2009 meeting, the members of the Texas Board of Nursing discussed the approval status of St. Michael's School of Nursing and Technology and considered the report of the August 25, 2009 survey visit. Based upon the discussion and the survey report, it was the decision of the Board to accept the report and issue the following commendations and requirements to be met. Members of the Board wish to thank you, Ms. Marta Montelongo, and Mr. Micario Montelongo for being present at the meeting to answer questions.

COMMENDATIONS:

1. Commend the administration for their ongoing support of the vocational nursing educational program in this period of transition.
2. Commend the program director and faculty for their dedication to ensure the success of the program.

PROPOSED REQUIREMENTS:

1. Rule 214.4(a)(1)(b)&(c) related to Approval: In order for the program to progress to Full Approval status, the program must meet requirements and respond to all recommendations issued by the Board and the licensing examination result of the first graduating class must be evaluated by the Board. Approval status of programs may be changed if there is a failure to maintain an 80% passing rate on the licensing examination by first-time candidates. The first graduating class of St. Michael's School of Nursing and Technology demonstrated a 58.33% NCLEX-PN® pass rate. **Therefore**, the program director shall submit monthly progress reports to the Texas BON, including students' grades, standardized test scores, and clinical performance evaluations. The first monthly monitoring report is due by December 5, 2009. In addition, the program director shall provide an evaluation of the implementation of effectiveness of corrective measures to the Texas BON by April 1, 2010.
2. Rule 214.6(i) related to Administration and Organization: The director/coordinator shall have the authority to direct the nursing educational program in all its phases, including approval of teaching staff, selection of appropriate clinical sites, admission, progression, probation, dismissal of students, and enforcement of student policies. During the interview with administration and the program director, it became apparent that the program director needs to be given the authority to direct the nursing educational program in all its phases, as outlined in Rule 214.6(i). **Therefore**, the program director shall be required to submit to the Texas BON examples of minutes that reflect the director has full authority for the program of study by April 1, 2009.

Requirements are mandatory criterion based on program assessment directly related to the rule that shall be addressed in the manner prescribed.

Documentation of the address of the above requirements to be met shall be submitted to the Board office at the times identified in each requirement. If you have any questions or if we may be of assistance, please contact Board staff at 512-305-7660 or by email at virginia.ayars@bon.state.tx.us.

Sincerely,

Linda R. Rounds, PhD, RN, FNP
President

Virginia D. Ayars, MS, RN
Nursing Consultant for Education

cc: Marta Montelongo, Administrator