

**Consideration for Change of Approval Status from Initial to Full Approval
Texas State Technical College Harlingen in Harlingen, Texas
Vocational Nursing Education Program**

Summary of Request:

Consider the request for change of approval status for Texas State Technical College (TSTC) Harlingen in Harlingen, Texas, from initial to full approval based upon compliance with Board rules, the 2010 NCLEX-PN® examination pass rate, and summary report of survey visit (Attachment #1).

Historical Perspective:

- The Vocational Nursing Education Program at TSTC in Harlingen was approved by the Board in April, 2009 to begin in May, 2009.
- The 2010 NCLEX-PN® examination pass rate for the first cohort was **100% (16/16)**.
- Board staff conducted a survey visit to the program on March 23, 2011.
- A summary of the survey report is included in Attachment #1.

Findings from the Survey Visit:

Pros:

- The director and nursing faculty demonstrated competence in their role and commitment to the success of the program.
- The college administration expressed strong support for the program and an interest in establishing an Associate Degree Nursing Education program on their campus.
- Students spoke positively of the curriculum and of the instruction. There is open communication between the faculty and students.
- The director and faculty utilize an online learning system for student testing, test review, test analysis, and ongoing student progression data.
- A wide variety of clinical experiences is available to the students.
- A larger building on campus will soon be available to provide more space for the nursing program.

Cons:

- The nursing program is presently located in a building shared by all allied health programs. One large room serves as a nursing skills lab and a classroom. This room is also shared with another health program.
- Though the program continues to evaluate their processes in ongoing dialogues between director and faculty members, they have not incorporated a systematic documentation method for program evaluation, decision-making, and program revisions.

Suggested Recommendations and Requirement:

Recommendations:

1. The administration is strongly encouraged to include the vocational nursing program director and faculty in the planning of any reconstruction and allocation of space for the nursing programs in the adjoining building (subject to the official decision to move).
2. The program director and faculty are encouraged to design a system for documenting in the total program evaluation their informal and ongoing dialogue and decisions for revising the program of study.

Staff Recommendation:

Move to change the approval status of the Texas State Technical College Harlingen Vocational Nursing Education Program in Harlingen, Texas, from initial to full, accept the report of the March 23, 2011 survey visit, and issue the recommendations in the attached letter (See Attachment #2).

**Summary of Survey Visit
Texas State Technical College in Harlingen, Texas
Vocational Nursing Program**

Overview:

- A survey visit to Texas State Technical College in Harlingen, Texas, Vocational Nursing Education Program was conducted March 23, 2011, by Janice Hooper, Nursing Consultant for Education.
- A previous survey visit was conducted on March, 2009, prior to admitting students to the program.
- A summary of the focal areas of the March 23, 2011 visit follows:

Rule 214.1: General Requirements:

The director and faculty demonstrated accountability for staying abreast and complying with the Board's rules and regulations and the Nursing Practice Act. These documents are available to faculty and they are familiar with the Board's web site. The director has attended the New Director Orientation twice and stated that the repeat participation was very valuable even after serving in the role since the program began. The program plans to include printed copies of the Nursing Practice Act as a required text for the program.

Rule 214.6: Administration and Organization:

The administration of the college provide adequate financial support and resources to operate the program. The director indicated that the needs for resources for the program are met. The most problematic issue is scarcity of space in the building. (See section on Facilities and Resources below.) There have recently been administrative and organizational changes, but communication lines seem to be in place.

The director, Susann East, authored the proposal and has been directing the program since it began. She has a strong commitment to the program and to educating competent and knowledgeable nurses. She has been instrumental in incorporating an online learning management system for student testing and student progression data base. Ms. East's focus for the program is to produce quality graduates to serve the needs for licensed vocational nurses in the community.

Rule 214.7: Faculty:

The director and two full time faculty provide the instruction for the program. One of the faculty members is enrolled in a graduate program. The director and faculty described the clinical experiences and student progression in meeting clinical objectives. The faculty collaborate to provide educational and clinical opportunities to meet the learning needs of individual students. The director and faculty are engaged in ongoing evaluation of program processes and making changes as required.

All new faculty at TSTC receive a semester course in instruction to assist them in their teaching responsibilities.

Rule 214.8: Students:

There are currently 23 students in the program who will graduate in April. The cohort began with 30 students and 5 withdrew during the first semester because of the difficulty of the program and time commitment required. Students are not permitted to work during the week when classes are in session. Strong admission and progression policies are in place, are enforced, and have the support of the administration. Students are aware of their opportunity to serve in campus governance but state that their commitment to nursing studies does not permit the time to engage in these activities. It was evident that they have open access to the director and nursing faculty. It was also evident from the student-faculty and student-director interactions observed that the students respect the faculty and appreciate their expertise. A new cohort is admitted each year and 30 students will be admitted in May. When students begin the vocational nursing program, they have already taken two semesters of Anatomy and Physiology, which offers an excellent foundation for the nursing program.

Rule 214.9: Program of Study; and 214.10 Clinical Learning Experiences.

The nursing program is presented in 3 semesters of 15 weeks each. The required curriculum meets rule requirements and has prepared the first cohort to achieve a 100% pass rate on the NCLEX examination. Multiple and diverse clinical experiences including labor and delivery, and pediatrics, provide clinical learning opportunities. The director and faculty continually seek out new clinical facilities to further enhance the program. An adequate skills lab is also used as a classroom. This dual use of the room is less than optimal and it is also shared with the CNA program. The need for more space is recognized by administration and a possible move to a separate building for nursing is planned.

Rule 214.11: Facilities, Resources and Services:

Board staff discussed the need for more space for the nursing program, preferably a separate skills lab and a dedicated classroom. Nursing faculty offices are adequate but are not presently located near the director's office, and closer proximity to each other would be desirable. A move to an adjacent building (as it becomes available) would allow these changes to be made and would give more appropriate space to the nursing program. Board staff strongly recommended that the director and nursing faculty are included in planning the reconstruction and allocation of space in the other building. The college is planning to seek approval to establish a new Associate Degree in Nursing program and this would also require the additional space mentioned above.

Rule 214.12: Records:

A locked space is provided for records and files.

Rule 214.13: Total Program Evaluation:

The program director stated that they recognize a need for a better system for documentation of the program evaluation and revisions to the program. In the conversation with the director and faculty, it was obvious that they have ongoing dialogues about daily outcomes and about strategies to continually improve their processes and student outcomes. Board staff encouraged the group to initiate a more effective system to capture these decisions and changes in writing. The Vice President of Student Learning also indicated this would be an excellent contribution to the ongoing strategic planning of the college and would incorporate the nursing program's input into meeting strategic objectives.

Conclusion:

The new vocational nursing program at Texas State Technical College Harlingen has been in compliance with Board rules since it has begun in 2009. Their first graduating class achieved 100% pass rate on the NCLEX examination. Three of the graduates have enrolled in professional nursing programs and have reported to the faculty that their preparation in the vocational program has readied them for this advanced education. Since this is a small program, the director and nursing faculty have a strong commitment to the success of the individual students. The director has been very fastidious in maintaining high standards, making adjustments as they began the program, and dealing with issues in a professional manner.

DRAFT LETTER

May 2, 2011

Susann East, RN, Director
Vocational Nursing Program
Texas State Technical College Harlingen
1902 N. Loop 499
Harlingen, Texas 78550

Dear Ms. East:

At the April 28-29, 2011 meeting, the Texas Board of Nursing discussed the approval status of the Texas State Technical College Harlingen Vocational Nursing Education Program in Harlingen and the report of the March 23, 2011 survey visit. Based upon the 2010 NCLEX-PN® examination pass rate, the program's compliance with the Board's rules and regulations, and the survey visit report, the Board changed the approval status from initial to full, and issued the following recommendations:

Recommendations:

1. The administration is strongly encouraged to include the vocational nursing program director and faculty in the planning of any reconstruction and allocation of space for the nursing programs in the adjoining building (subject to the official decision to move).
2. The program director and faculty are encouraged to design a system for documenting in the total program evaluation their informal and ongoing dialogue and decisions for revising the program of study.

Please provide a written response to these recommendations by October 3, 2011. A recommendation is a specific suggestion based upon program assessment indirectly related to the rules to which the program must respond but in a method of their choosing.

The Board offers congratulations and best wishes to the Vocational Nursing Program at TSTC Harlingen in their continued success to serve their community.

Sincerely,

Kristin K. Benton, MSN, RN
President

Janice I. Hooper, PhD, RN
Nursing Consultant for Education

copy: THECB
TWC