

**Report of Routine Survey Visit
 Alvin Community College in Alvin, Texas
 Vocational Nursing Education Program**

Summary of Request:

Consider the report of the April 12, 2013, routine survey visits to Alvin Community College Vocational Nursing (VN) Education Programs in Alvin, Texas (See Attachment #1.) The survey visit was conducted by LeAnn Wagner, MSN, RN, one of the contract program evaluators employed by the Board of Nursing (BON). The previous survey visit was conducted in February, 2003.

Historical Perspective:

- Alvin Community College operates an Associate Degree Nursing Program (ADN) and the VN program in Alvin. The ADN program is accredited by the Accreditation Commission for Education in Nursing, Inc. (ACEN) (previously the National League for Nursing Accrediting Commission).
- Karen Briza, BSN, RN is the current Director for the VN program but has announced her resignation and retirement effective August 15, 2013. The qualified candidate named as her replacement is Melinda Wallace, RN, who has taught in the program since 2007.
- The Alvin Community College VN Program was established in 1975.
- Alvin Community College is accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools.
- The NCLEX-PN® examination pass rates for the past five (5) years for the VN program are included in the table below:

Alvin Community College VN Program in Alvin

Exam Year	NCLEX-PN® Pass Rate	Number of First Time Candidates (Passed/Total)	BON Approval Status
2012	100%	30/30	Full
2011	96.97%	32/33	Full
2010	96.00%	24/25	Full
2009	93.48%	43/46	Full
2008	93.55%	29/31	Full

Synopsis of the Survey Visit:

- The Program Evaluator reported a very collegial spirit among the faculty, administration, and students.
- It is evident that the program of study is based upon achieving the *Differentiated Essential Competencies*.
- The nursing faculty meet at least every other month and student representatives are in attendance and have input into the governance.
- The workload for the program director provides release time for administrative duties.
- The nursing faculty is composed of two (2) full-time and two to three (2-3) part-time, depending upon the content for each semester. Faculty workload is very heavy with thirty (30) student contact hours per week. There is no lab coordinator at the present time, so faculty carry out all set-ups and clean-ups in the lab, as well as clinical remediation in the lab.
- Resources for professional development activities for the faculty are provided.

- Twenty-two (22) students are enrolled in the program. There were forty-three (43) students in the original admission and they have had a 51% attrition rate. The losses seem to be attributable to failures in Anatomy & Physiology. The program is considering making this course a prerequisite to the nursing program in order to better identify successful candidates for the program.
- Students indicated that faculty are knowledgeable and available to students, and that the faculty abide by program policies.
- The curriculum is logically organized with “front-loading” of nursing skills.
- The program does not use online instruction for any courses, but faculty are engaged in training to teach online courses.
- Simulation experiences are used for the entire first clinical course to prepare students for hands-on patient care.
- Clinical learning experiences occur in clinics, long term care facilities, acute care OB facilities, and long term acute care facilities. The long term acute care facilities offer learning experiences with patients with complex medical-surgical problems.
- The VN program is housed in the Health Science Center that was completed in 2007.
- The program uses their written Total Program Evaluation Plan to collect and report program data. The program evaluator suggested that it may be used to greater advantage to address such issues as high attrition.

Pros and Cons from the Survey Visit:

Pros:

- The Program Evaluator found the program to be in full compliance with Rule 214.
- Administration, faculty, and students all expressed strong satisfaction with the program.
- There are ample clinical opportunities available for the students to meet clinical objectives.
- The physical resources provide a good learning environment for the students.

Cons:

- The program has a high attrition rate that occurs in the first semester.
- Faculty workload is heavy and could be alleviated by using a lab coordinator.

Rationale for Recommendations:

The program meets all sections of Rule 214. Faculty workload is heavier than in most community college settings and could possibly be buffered if a lab assistant or manager were available to handle lab functions.

Staff Recommendation:

Move to accept the report of findings from the routine survey visits to the Alvin Community College Vocational Nursing Program in Alvin, Texas, and to congratulate the program on many years of success. Further, the Board issues the following recommendation:

The college administration and program director should consider the possibility of adding a lab instructor/manager to the staff to allow faculty to use more of their time for instruction, evaluation and grading, and other faculty functions. Board Staff request a response to this recommendation by January 1, 2014.

(See draft letter in Attachment #2.)

**Summary of Survey Visit
Alvin Community College in Alvin, Texas
Vocational Nursing Program**

Purpose of Visit: routine survey visit

Date of Visit: April 12, 2013

Program Evaluator: LeAnn Wagner, MSN, RN

Program Evaluator met with:

- John Bethscheider, Ed.D., Provost, Dean of Instruction
- Sally Durand, MSN, RN, CNE, Director of Nursing Programs
- Karen Briza, BSN, RN, Vocational Nursing Program Department Chair
- Melinda Wallace, RN, Vocational Nursing Program Full-time Instructor
- Nedette DeVries, RN, Vocational Nursing Program Full-time Instructor
- Cindy Vallas, Librarian
- VN Students

Program Evaluator:

- Reviewed the curriculum materials including all syllabi
- Reviewed the Student and Faculty Handbooks
- Reviewed the clinical evaluation tools
- Reviewed the total program evaluation plan and committee minutes
- Reviewed student assignments and tests
- Observed one VN class in session
- Toured the Alvin Community College Campus including Student Services and the Library
- Toured the nursing offices, classrooms, and skills labs, and
- Conducted exit conference

Summary of Findings

Philosophy/Mission and Objectives/Outcomes

- There is a detailed crosswalk in every course syllabi that shows how all the *Differentiated Essential Competencies for Graduates of Texas Nursing Programs (DECs)* are taught throughout the curriculum.
- Program philosophy and objectives are reviewed according to the Total Program Evaluation Plan which is every other year in March.

Administration and Organization

- The organizational chart demonstrates lines of communication, authority, and responsibility between the nursing program and the college administration as well as within the nursing program; students are included in this component of the organizational chart.
- A very collegial spirit was demonstrated in the meetings with faculty, administration, and students; there is a very positive learning environment for students.
- There are student representatives on every program committee; students indicated that faculty listen to them and are in fact looking for a new geriatric textbook at the students' request.
- Faculty meet every other month (or more often if needed) and keep detailed minutes of the meetings.

- Although the program director's workload form states that she teaches 6 hours of lecture and 16 hours of clinical each week the actual workload is an average of 3-4 hours per week of lecture and substituting in clinical when needed; the majority of program director's time is spent on administrative responsibilities; program director will be retiring in August, 2013 with one of the experienced full-time faculty members assuming that role.

Faculty

- Faculty policies regarding qualifications, responsibilities, performance evaluation criteria, and terms of employment are clearly stated in the Faculty Handbook.
- The Program Evaluator met with the two full-time faculty who were very positive about the program and felt they had an excellent relationship with the program director; they emphasized that the program really was a team effort with everyone, including the students, participating.
- There was evidence of a very positive learning environment throughout the program.
- Faculty workload is very heavy with 30 student contact hours per week. This is twice the student contact hours required of academic faculty who have 15. According to the Director of the Nursing Programs there is a different salary scale for each of the technical programs that takes into account workload and student contact hours.
- Faculty assignments are made by the program director in collaboration with the 2 full-time faculty; there is a written orientation schedule for new faculty and since the faculty is so small all faculty and the program director participate in the orientation process.
- Every fall there are professional development activities for all college faculty, including the VN faculty; in addition the faculty attend the annual TAVNE Conference every year where professional development activities related specifically to VN educators are held; faculty can request reimbursement for other pertinent professional development activities and these requests have always been granted.
- Faculty evaluations are conducted by the program director using both student and administrative input; nursing licenses are validated by the program director and recorded in the personnel file.
- There is no lab coordinator at this time so faculty must do all their own set-up and tear down for lab as well as any remediation needed for either clinical or theory.
- Faculty supervise students in all areas where they give patient care with preceptors used only in a pediatric clinic.
- For the 50 students admitted in the summer there are the program director (who has minimal teaching responsibilities), 2 full-time faculty, and 3 part-time faculty. The program has lost 10 students or more for several years in this course so for the remainder of the program there would be 2 full-time and 2 part-time faculty.
- Student policies regarding admission, readmission, dismissal, progression, and graduation are clearly stated in the Student and Faculty Handbooks and these policies are supported by the administration. Students indicated that these policies were fairly enforced.

Students

- Currently there are 22 students enrolled; there were 43 students in this cohort that began last summer (51% retention). The current students are enrolled in 17 credit hours including 24 hours per week of clinical.
- The Program Evaluator met with 7 of the current students and they were very positive about the program and indicated that the faculty is very knowledgeable and always available when needed. They indicated that the faculty strictly enforces program policies but are always fair.
- Students are apprised of eligibility issues and sign a document to that affect; the program plans to use the BON background check for program admission beginning with the 2014 class.
- Their only concern about the program was the large number of students who were unsuccessful in VNSG 1420 Anatomy & Physiology in the first semester of the program; the faculty indicated that they were considering making that course a prerequisite to program admission.

- Students participate in every VN Program committee and indicated that they do have a voice on the committees.
- The Student Handbook contains all required policies.

Program of Study

- The curriculum is organized in a logical fashion with front loading of most nursing skills.
- The program does not use online instruction for any course but both full-time faculty members are taking an online course at the college to prepare them to teach content online. They were both very positive about this course.
- Simulation is used for the entire first clinical course (VNSG 1160) which is taught in the summer. This course has a ratio of 1 semester credit for every 8 hours of clinical instruction; the other clinical courses have a 1:4 ratio. Faculty are considering having all courses with a 1:4 ratio and making VNSG 1160 VNSG 1260, giving 2 semester credit.
- The program does detailed item analysis of every test to determine validity, reliability and level of difficulty of each test item.
- There are a number of course objectives in the theory courses that can only be measured in the clinical setting; faculty will make the appropriate changes in language so that all course objectives can be measured in the setting where the course is taught.

Clinical Learning Experiences

- The surveyor found that clinical contracts for the program were current.
- The program has a policy on clinical practice site selection that is used as a guide to choose clinical learning sites.
- Currently the program uses clinics, long term care facilities, acute care OB facilities, and long term acute care facilities for clinical learning experiences; although they do not use med-surg acute care facilities the long term acute care facilities provide sufficient numbers of patients with complex needs for student learning.
- Simulation is used for the entire first clinical course (VNSG 1160) as well as at least once a semester in each of the other clinical courses.
- Each clinical faculty member has 10 students or less in the clinical setting.

Facilities, Resources, and Services

- The VN Program is housed in the Health Science Center which was completed in 2007; this is a very attractive and modern building that is well equipped with more than adequate furnishings and equipment; there is a spacious nursing lab for the VN Program with another lab for the ADN Program; classrooms are well lit and spacious with more than adequate furniture.
- In 2008 Hurricane Ike destroyed the roof on the library building damaging the entire collection; today the library has been restored and serves the entire campus well.
- All student services are available to the VN students with many students receiving assistance with study skills and test taking skills.
- The VN Program follows the college records and retention policy.
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Total Program Evaluation

- The Program does have a written Total Program Evaluation that guides them in collecting data. The Program Evaluator encouraged the faculty to include an evaluation of student attrition in the plan to gather data that will help retain students in the future.

DRAFT LETTER

July 22, 2013

Karen Briza, BSN, RN, Director
Vocational Nursing Program
Alvin Community College
3110 Mustang Road
Alvin, Texas 77511

Dear Ms. Briza:

At the July 18-19, 2013 meeting, the members of the Texas Board of Nursing discussed the report of the April 12, 2013 survey visit to the Alvin Community College Vocational Nursing Program in Alvin, Texas. Based upon the discussion and review of the survey report, it was the decision of the Board to accept the findings from the survey visit and to issue the following recommendation:

Recommendation:

The college administration and program director should consider the possibility of adding a lab instructor/manager to the staff to allow faculty to use more of their time for instruction, evaluation and grading, and other faculty functions.

Please provide a response to this recommendation by January 1, 2014.

The Board wishes to congratulate the program on many years of success.

If you have any questions or if we may be of assistance, please contact Board staff at (512) 305-6814.

Sincerely,

Kathy Shipp, MSN, RN, FNP
President of the Board

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

copy: Sally Durand, MSN, RN, Technical Division IV Chair and Director of the Associate Degree Program