

**Report of Routine Survey Visit
Northeast Texas Community College in Mt. Pleasant, Texas
Associate Degree Nursing Education Program**

Summary of Request

- Consider the report of the routine survey visit to Northeast Texas Community College (NTCC) Associate Degree Nursing (ADN) Education Program in Mt. Pleasant, Texas. A routine six (6) year survey visit to the NTCC ADN Program was conducted on March 26 - 27, 2013 by Gayle Varnell, PhD, APRN, CPNP-PC, Contract Program Evaluator (See Attachment #1).

Historical Perspective:

- The Northeast Texas Community College (NTCC) in Mt. Pleasant, Texas Associate Degree Nursing (ADN) Education Program began in 1988 in cooperation with Paris Junior College and admitted ten second year students. In fall 1989, the NTCC began their own ADN program, admitting twelve (12) students.
- In fall 1989, the VN and ADN programs were joined under one single program director.
- The Mobility LVN-RN track began in 1992.
- A new University and Allied Health Building was built in 2006 and the Division of Allied Health was revised to include a Dean of Allied Health.
- A 2010 Title III grant enabled expansion of simulation equipment and capabilities. The VN mobility tracked moved to an online and hybrid format.
- In October 2012, Kathleen Ethridge, EdD, MSN, RN, was appointed the Interim Director of the NTCC nursing education programs.
- The NCLEX-RN® examination pass rates for the past five years are provided in the table below:

Exam Year	NCLEX-RN® Pass Rate	Examination	Number of First-Time Candidates (Passed/Total)	BON Approval Status
2012	91.30%		21/23	Full
2011	100.00%		17/17	Full
2010	87.50%		21/24	Full
2009	100.00%		21/21	Full
2008	59.40%		19/32	Full

Synopsis of the Survey Visit:

- Board contract evaluator identified many program strengths.
- Findings from the survey visit indicated that the program is in compliance with Board Rule 215.

Pros and Cons from Survey Visit:

Pros:

- The recently appointed (October 2012) interim director, Dr. Ethridge, has been on faculty at NTCC since 1991 and has the knowledge, skills, and ability to effectively administer the nursing programs.
- The interim director and faculty report that the ADN program receives strong support from NTCC administration.
- Besides, the director, three (3) full-time faculty teach in both the VN and ADN programs and one (1) faculty teaches solely in the ADN program.
- Students interviewed expressed a high degree of satisfaction with the program and confidence that the coordinator/director and faculty are committed to their success.
- The program meets a need in the community for an associate degree nursing education program and receives strong support from clinical affiliates.

- The program has a pathway which enables qualified graduating vocational nursing students to transition directly into the ADN program.
- The program has adequate contracts with clinical affiliating agencies in order for students to meet all clinical objectives in the program.
- All clinical learning experiences occur in faculty supervised, direct-patient care, hands-on, clinical settings. The program utilizes simulation to prepare students for hands-on patient care and for remediation purposes.

Cons:

- The nursing program has experienced some major changes in leadership in the past few months.
- The program learning outcomes, student handbook, and course syllabi objectives need to reflect the *Differentiated Essential Competencies (DECs) (2010)* objectives more completely.
- There were three faculty resignations last year.

Rationale for Staff Recommendations:

The program is in full compliance with Rule 215. *The Differentiated Essential Competencies (DECs) (2010)* are not fully incorporated into program documents.

Recommendation #1:

The NTCC program director and faculty shall assure that the *Differentiated Essential Competencies (DECs) (2010)* are incorporated into all program learning outcomes, course syllabi learning outcomes, and the student handbook. The program director shall submit a written response to Board Staff no later than October 31, 2013.

Staff Recommendation:

Move to accept the report of findings of the routine six (6) - year survey visit to Northeast Texas Community College Associate Degree Nursing (ADN) Education Program in Mt. Pleasant, Texas (See Attachment #2).

**Summary of Survey Visit
Northeast Texas Community College in Mt. Pleasant, Texas
Associate Degree Nursing Education Program**

Purpose of Survey Visit: routine survey visit

Date of Visit: March 26 & 27, 2013

Board Representative Conducting Visit: Gayle Varnell, PhD, APRN, Contracted Program Evaluator

Board Representative met with:

- Kathleen Ethridge, EdD, MSN, RN, Interim Director of Nursing Programs
- Dr. Brad Johnson, President of Northeast Texas Community College
- Dr. Ron Clinton, Executive Vice President for Instruction
- Jena Hamra, PhD, Dean of Allied Health
- Lisa McCuller, BSN, RN VN Program Coordinator/Faculty
- Crystal Brown, BSN, RN, VN Program Faculty
- Jennifer Wilson, BSN, RN, VN Program Faculty (on waiver)
- Cynthia Amerson, MSN, RN, VN/ADN Program Faculty
- Irene Richardson, MSN, RN ADN Program Faculty
- Nicole Walker, Administrative Assistant
- Casey Mayben, RN, Nursing Director East Texas Medical Center (ETMC) Hospital – Pittsburgh
- Perry Henderson, CEO, East Texas Medical Center Hospital – Pittsburgh
- Seventeen (17) Associate Degree Nursing Students (second level)

Board Representative conducted the following activities:

- held initial conference with interim director, dean, and administration;
- met with faculty members;
- interviewed students;
- observed simulation lab/teaching assignment as well as classroom teaching;
- toured NTCC campus and ETMC Hospital in Pittsburg, Texas;
- reviewed records and documents including: student and faculty files, minutes of faculty meetings, student and faculty handbooks, syllabi, clinical evaluation tools, and the Total Program Evaluation (TPE) Plan
- conducted exit interview with interim director and Dean of Allied Health.

Summary of Findings:

Findings Related to Administration:

- Administration stated that the ADN program adds value to the college and fulfills a need in the community and expressed strong support for the ADN program.
- Dr. Kathleen Ethridge, EdD, MSN, RN was appointed interim director of the Nursing Programs at NTCC in October, 2012.
- Dr. Ethridge has an MSN from the University of Texas at Tyler and a Doctorate in Education from Texas A&M Commerce. She has been on faculty at NTCC since 1991. She is qualified to assume the program leadership role.
- Dr. Ethridge carries a classroom teaching load of three hours (3) per week in addition to her duties as the interim director of the nursing programs.

Findings Related to Program of Study:

- The ADN program is a seventy-two (72) credit hour program of study, based on sequential learning.
- The program is well organized and includes all Board required content.

- The curriculum is designed to ensure students are competent in skills prior to entering the clinical setting.
- The *Differentiated Essential Competencies (DECs) (2010)* are not fully incorporated into the curriculum.
- The teaching model is based upon face-to-face and online modalities.
- Admission policies have sufficient rigor to ensure that qualified applicants are admitted into the program, including a weighted point system in college level prerequisite courses.
- Standardized testing is used throughout the program for progression, remediation, and graduation purposes.
- The program has implemented required remediation and tutoring as well as a NCLEX-RN ® review course.

Findings Related to Faculty:

- The ADN instruction is carried out by experienced faculty members.
- Three (3) full-time faculty members teach in both the VN and ADN programs and one (1) faculty member teaches solely in the ADN program.
- The interim director has a three (3) hour teaching load in addition to her administrative duties.
- Faculty members are actively engaged in curriculum planning, implementation, and evaluation.
- Board required policies are documented.
- Faculty members communicate frequently and meet regularly. Minutes of faculty meetings are maintained.

Findings Related to Students:

- Students stated that they enrolled in the NTCC program because of location, tuition, and the reputation of the program.
- Students cited that the strengths of the program are: clinical experiences, the size of the classes, and the faculty.
- The majority of students reported they plan to seek further education.
- NTCC has a program in place to transition students completing the VN program into the ADN program.
- The interim director reported that the majority of graduates remain in the community and are able to find employment in local hospitals and clinical agencies.
- The current program enrollment is fifty-five (55) students [eighteen (18) first-year students and thirty-seven (37) second-year students.]

Findings Related to Clinical Learning Experiences:

- The program has active clinical contracts with affiliating agencies which provide a variety of appropriate clinical experiences for the curriculum.
- All clinical learning experiences occur in faculty-supervised, direct-patient care, hands-on clinical settings.
- The clinical experiences are scheduled to match related didactic in the classroom.
- The clinical evaluation tools are individually based upon the course content and measure progression of student behaviors across the curriculum.
- Formative and summative evaluations are evident.
- Board faculty-to-student ratios are maintained.

Findings Related to Facilities, Resources, and Services:

- The program has the capacity, resources and personnel to admit forty-eight (48) students annually: twenty-four (24) generic ADN students and twenty-four (24) LVN students.
- The building housing the nursing program is appropriately equipped and offers a positive learning environment.
- The director's large private office is conveniently located to nursing faculty offices.
- Full-time faculty members are provided with fully-furnished private offices.
- The facilities include restrooms as well as faculty and student lounges and break areas.
- The ADN program classroom and nursing skills laboratories are adequately equipped.

- The interim director stated that resources are adequate to meet the educational objectives.

Findings Related to Records and Reports:

- Current and graduated student records for the past two (2) years are maintained in a locked filing cabinet in the Nursing office.
- Faculty meeting minutes for the past three (3) years are available.

Findings Related to Total Program Evaluation:

- A written plan for systematic program evaluation includes all required components.
 - Evaluation methods and instruments are periodically reviewed as evidenced by faculty meeting minutes.
 - Minutes of program evaluation meetings are maintained.
 - The Total Program Evaluation Plan was most recently revised in May 2012.
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DRAFT LETTER

July 22, 2013

Kathleen Ethridge, EdD, MSN, RN, Interim Director
Associate Degree Nursing Education Program
Northeast Texas Community College
P.O. Box 1307
Mt. Pleasant, TX 75456-1307

Dear Dr. Ethridge:

At the July 18-19, 2013 meeting, the members of the Texas Board of Nursing (Board) considered the report of the routine survey visit to the Northeast Texas Community College Associate Degree Nursing Education Program in Mt. Pleasant, Texas. It was the decision of the Board to accept the report of the survey visit and issue the following recommendation:

Recommendation #1:

The NTCC program director and faculty shall assure that the *Differentiated Essential Competencies (DECs) (2010)* are incorporated into all program learning outcomes, course syllabi learning outcomes, and the student handbook. The program director shall submit a written response to Board Staff no later than October 31, 2013.

Recommendations are suggestions based upon program assessment indirectly related to the rules to which a program must respond but in a method of their choosing.

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

Sandi Emerson, MSN, RN
Nursing Consultant for Education

copy: Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board
President of Northeast Texas Community College