

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

**Summary of Request:**

Consider the report of the routine survey visit to Houston Community College in Houston, Texas Vocational Nursing Education Program (VN). The visit was conducted on June 25, 2013 by LeAnn Wagner, MSN, RN, Contract Program Evaluator (See Attachment #1).

**Historical Perspective:**

- The VN program at Houston Community College began in 1951.
- The VN program is delivered in twelve (12) months and admits two (2) cohorts each year of sixty (60) students each.
- Deborah J. Simmons-Johnson, MSN, RN is the program director.
- The NCLEX examination pass rate for the past five (5) years is presented in the table:

<b>Examination Year</b>	<b>NCLEX-PN® Examination Pass Rate</b>	<b>Number of First-Time Candidates (Passed/Total)</b>	<b>BON Approval Status</b>
2012	93.22%	55/59	Full
2011	87.93%	51/58	Full
2010	91.53%	54/59	Full
2009	84.75%	50/59	Full
2008	85.23%	75/88	Full

Summary of the Survey Visit:

Pros:

- The VN Program at HCC is a well established program with an experienced, knowledgeable, and academically prepared program director and faculty who work together as a team.
- An inviting and well equipped building provides a positive learning environment.
- There is strong administrative support for faculty professional development activities.
- A variety of clinical learning experiences in acute care, assisted living, long term care, mental health, and clinics provide students with a strong clinical practice base.

Cons:

- Program documents need review and revision for currency and to ensure they are in compliance with current Board rules. Incorporating the DEC's into all aspects of the curriculum has not been completed.
- The Systematic Plan of Evaluation developed for the ACEN accreditation process needs a review to ensure that elements required in Rule 214.13 are included.
- There are not consistent and detailed committee meeting minutes that document program decisions.
- There is no signed documentation in student files indicating students received eligibility information.

**Rationale for Recommendation:**

The Houston Community College Vocational Nursing Education Program is in the process of reviewing all documents as they are preparing to seek accreditation from the Accreditation Commission for Nursing Education. The Program Evaluator determined that the program documents are outdated and need review and revision for currency and consistency with Board rules. The faculty have already begun this work. The requirement mandates that the faculty proceed with a total program review to ensure that all requirements in Rule 214 are met including, but not limited to, all required faculty and student policies, inclusion of the DEC's throughout the curriculum, student receipt for licensing eligibility information, and a process for documenting faculty decisions made in faculty meetings. The Total Program Evaluation Plan is being redeveloped in the format for accreditation, and as the program begins to use this evaluation plan, they must document decisions based upon evaluation data in the faculty meeting minutes.

The recommendation is included to ensure that clinical affiliating agreements are established with agencies that meet a set of specific criteria based upon program and clinical objectives and developed by faculty.

**Staff Recommendation:**

Move to accept the report of findings from the survey visit to Houston Community College Vocational Nursing Program and issue the following requirement and recommendation (see draft of letter in Attachment #2).

Requirement:

The director and faculty shall complete the review and revision of the following program documents for currency, consistency with Board rules, and inclusion of the *Differentiated Essential Competencies*: philosophy, program objectives, syllabi, clinical evaluation tools, Faculty Handbook, Student Handbook, and Total Program Evaluation Plan. All revised program and curriculum documents shall be submitted to Board Staff no later than April 1, 2014. These submissions shall include a copy of the student receipt form for eligibility information in the Student Handbook.

Recommendation:

The faculty is encouraged to develop specific criteria based upon program and clinical objectives for the selection of clinical affiliating agencies.

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

**Purpose of Visit:** routine survey visit

**Date of Visit:** June 25, 2013

**Board Surveyor:** LeAnn Wagner, MSN, RN

**Board Surveyor met with:**

- Betty Young, PhD, JD, LLM, President
- Michael Edwards, JD, Executive Dean for Instruction
- Deborah J. Simmons-Johnson, MSN, RN, VN Program Director
- Penelope Williams, EdD, MSN, RN, Level Coordinator
- Charmaine A. Lewinson-Evans, MSN, RN, Full-Time Instructor
- Ashley M. Nichols, MSN, RN, Full-Time Instructor
- Mary E. Lockett, MS, RN, Level Coordinator
- Qiana Ross, MSN, RN, Full-Time Instructor
- Linda Lackey, EdD, RN, Full-Time Instructor
- Aerica Grant, MSN, RN, Full-Time Instructor
- Current VN students

**Board Surveyor:**

- Reviewed the curriculum materials including all syllabi
- Reviewed the VN Student Handbook and the HCC Faculty Handbook
- Reviewed the clinical evaluation tools
- Reviewed the total program evaluation plan, conceptual model, and committee minutes
- Reviewed student assignments and tests
- Reviewed student files, faculty files, and clinical affiliation agreements
- Toured the nursing offices, classrooms, and skills labs
- Conducted exit conference

**Summary of Findings**

Philosophy/Mission and Objectives/Outcomes

- The Program Director indicated that the faculty were currently reviewing and updating all aspects of the program including the philosophy and program objectives as part of their process to achieve program accreditation from the Accreditation Commission for Education in Nursing (ACEN). The projected date for a site visit by ACEN may be as early as 2014.
- The implementation of the *Differentiated Essential Competencies* (DECs) into the total curriculum has been begun but has not been completed.
- The conceptual framework is based to a large extent on Maslow's Hierarchy of Human Needs and Erikson's Stages of Growth and Development and identifies major and minor concepts that are included in the curriculum. Board Staff recommend a stronger focus on the nursing roles and competencies for graduates outlined in the DECs.

Administration and Organization

- The VN Program has comparable status to the other health care programs located on the Coleman Campus, but it is difficult for nursing faculty salaries to be competitive with other schools of nursing in the area.

- The facility where the program is housed is new and inviting, and a bond issue was recently passed to build a new facility that would be able to accommodate more students for all the health care programs.
- Documents indicate that the Program Director's knowledge and years of experience provide her a background to direct the program in all its aspects.
- The Program Evaluator examined a very large notebook that has a collection of policies and procedures for the nursing program. This has obviously served as the Faculty Handbook but needs revision and personalization as the VN Faculty Handbook. The documents indicate that there is a monthly faculty meeting and two meetings of the VN Advisory Committee each academic year. Minutes were available but were not consistently kept for each meeting and did not provide rationales for decision-making.
- Student representatives attend both faculty and advisory committee meetings.
- The Program Director does not have a teaching load but often teaches one or two theory units during the summer session.

### Faculty

- Many policies were reviewed in the policy notebook but a specific policy for faculty orientation was not found. Program Evaluator suggested faculty develop a designated VN Faculty Handbook where all policies and procedures are readily accessible.
- There is a college faculty handbook which has some general information about performance evaluation criteria and job responsibilities at Houston Community College. The job descriptions for the nursing faculty could utilize the same format for a consistent approach in program documents.
- The faculty workload is listed in the HCC Faculty Handbook as a 40 hour work week. No allowance is given for the size of the student group in a class in the workload.
- Faculty assignments are made by the program director in collaboration with the Level Coordinators and are based on educational preparation, clinical experience, and previous teaching experience.
- Faculty indicated that there are funds available for professional development activities. A workshop was held recently on concept based teaching. In addition the college funds VN faculty attendance at TAVNE each year.
- The Program Director and Administrative Assistant are responsible for validating current licensure of all faculty. This information is kept in the faculty files. No faculty members are waived at this time.
- The current Lab Coordinator is a non-nurse instructional specialist who schedules learning activities in the lab. The Simulation Coordinator is an LVN who prepares the lab so the faculty can conduct the simulation.
- Faculty are responsible for supervising the students' direct patient care clinical experiences; one faculty is responsible for checking on students during any observational experiences.
- There are 8 full-time and 10 adjunct faculty members.

### Students

- Detailed admission requirements are found on the VN Program web site and provided to students in written form by the Counseling Office. Each applicant is required to attend a face-to-face information session where this information is reviewed and students have an opportunity to ask questions.
- Readmission, dismissal, progression, and graduation policies are found in the VN and/or HCC Student Handbooks. Student policies need to be reviewed and updated for clarity and accuracy. There is limited information about license eligibility and no receipt was found in the handbook to ensure that students received this information.
- There are currently 74 students enrolled in the program with admission cohorts of sixty (60) students expected to be added in the fall and in the spring. The program director has the authority

to determine the number of students admitted during each enrollment period based on availability of faculty and clinical spaces. The program has a 64% retention rate.

- Students commented negatively about the large classes and overflow provided by video conferencing in Level 1 classes.

#### Program of Study

- The curriculum contains forty-four (44) semester hours taught over three (3) semesters with two (2) courses (VNSG 1216 – Nutrition and VNSG 1320 – Anatomy and Physiology) as prerequisites to program admission.
- According to the conceptual framework, the curriculum is based on Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs and Erikson's Stages of Growth and Development. Requirements in Rule 214 are well documented in the courses but the incorporation of the *Differentiated Essential Competencies* (DECs) seems to be limited to the clinical evaluation tools. The Program Evaluator suggested developing a crosswalk that demonstrates in which course each DEC is taught would provide evidence of complete integration of the DECs into the curriculum.
- There have been no recent curriculum changes and none are planned at this time.

#### Clinical Learning Experiences

- Clinical contracts for the program were current. Since many of the hospitals in the Medical Center have been seeking Magnet status, it is becoming difficult to secure adequate clinical placements in the Medical Center.
- Clinical sites include assisted living facilities, acute care hospitals, long term acute care, long term care, specialty clinics, and mental health agencies.
- Each clinical faculty member has 10 students or less in the clinical setting if they are supervising direct patient care. Patient assignments are given to the student the day of the experience with the faculty member making every effort to coordinate the patient assignment with what is being taught in class. The clinical learning experiences adequately prepare the students for practice.
- The program does not have a written evaluation tool used to evaluate facilities for potential clinical learning experiences. When a potential new clinical site is identified the program director or level coordinator will visit the site and speak to the nurse manager or the hospital educator to determine if this would be a good site for student learning and if they are willing to take VN students.
- Some clinical learning objectives (as well as some theory objectives) are stated at a higher level than expected of LVN practice (examples: developing nursing care plans including nursing diagnoses, prioritizing nursing diagnoses, and performing complete physical assessments instead of focused assessments). The evaluator suggested a review of all course objectives to ensure they are at the appropriate level of practice.
- Simulation is used on a limited basis with the faculty determining the type of simulation experience that is conducted.

#### Facilities, Resources, and Services

- The facilities where the VN Program is housed in a modern building that is inviting providing a pleasant atmosphere for learning. However the building is quite crowded with students and a new building will be started soon to accommodate more students.
- The faculty are able to request items for the budget by submitting their requests to the Program Director for possible funding.
- The VN Program has access to three (3) skills labs with a total of thirty-six (36) beds; these labs are well stocked with supplies and there are adequate manikins for student practice. The department has access to two (2) adult, one (1) child, one (1) infant and one (1) obstetric high fidelity manikins and several low fidelity manikins.
- Secretarial support for the department is adequate with one (1) administrative assistant and one (1) secretary for the program.

### Records and Reports

- All confidential files are kept in a secure location.
- Student files were complete except for the lack of a signed receipt regarding Board license eligibility information.
- Faculty files were reviewed but were not consistently prepared.
- Minutes of all faculty committees for the last three (3) years have not been consistently kept in adequate detail to show rationale for decisions.

### Total Program Evaluation

- The Annual Learning Assessment Report has been used to serve as the Total Program Evaluation Plan but lacks items expected in Rule 214.13. The Systematic Plan of Evaluation given to the evaluator follows the model for the ACEN accreditation process but it is in the early stage of development. Board Staff do accept accreditation program evaluation models to meet rule requirements for the Total Evaluation Plan.

DRAFT LETTER

Deborah Simmons-Johnson, Med, MSN, BSN, RN, Director  
Vocational Nursing Education Program  
Houston Community College  
1900 Pressler Street, Suite 312  
Houston, Texas 77030

Dear Ms. Simmons-Johnson:

At the October 17-18, 2013 meeting, the members of the Texas Board of Nursing discussed the report of the June 25, 2013 survey visit to the Houston Community College Vocational Nursing Education Program in Houston, 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 issue the following requirement and recommendation:

Requirement

The director and faculty shall complete the review and revision of the following program documents for currency, consistency with Board rules, and inclusion of the *Differentiated Essential Competencies*: philosophy, program objectives, syllabi, clinical evaluation tools, Faculty Handbook, Student Handbook, and Total Program Evaluation Plan. All revised program and curriculum documents shall be submitted to Board Staff no later than April 1, 2014. These submissions shall include a copy of the student receipt form for eligibility information in the Student Handbook.

Recommendation:

The faculty is encouraged to develop specific criteria based upon program and clinical objectives for the selection of clinical affiliating agencies. A copy of these criteria shall be submitted to Board Staff not later than January 1, 2014.

A requirement is a mandatory criterion based on program assessment directly related to the rules that must be addressed in the manner prescribed.

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.

If you have questions or if Board Staff can be of assistance, please contact [Janice.hooper@bon.texas.gov](mailto:Janice.hooper@bon.texas.gov) or 512-305-6814.

Sincerely,

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

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

Copy: Michael Edwards, JD, Executive Dean for Instruction  
Betty Young, PhD, JD, LLM, President  
Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board