

**Report of Routine Survey Visit  
Kaplan College, Corpus Christi, Texas  
Vocational Nursing Education Program**

**Summary of Request:**

Consider the report of the routine survey visit to Kaplan College in Corpus Christi, Texas Vocational Nursing Education Program (VN). The visit was conducted on June 27, 2013 by LeAnn Wagner, MSN, RN, Contract Program Evaluator (See Attachment #1).

**Historical Perspective:**

- The VN program at Kaplan College in Corpus Christi began as Career Centers of Texas in 2007.
- The VN program is delivered in twelve (12) months and the usual admission plan has been four (4) cohorts each year of forty (40) students.
- Christine Rios-Irizarry, BSN, RN has the program director since July 2012.
- The NCLEX examination pass rate for the past five (5) years is presented in the table:

| <b>Examination Year</b> | <b>NCLEX-PN®<br/>Examination<br/>Rate</b> | <b>Pass</b> | <b>Number of First-Time<br/>Candidates<br/>(Passed/Total)</b> | <b>BON<br/>Status</b> | <b>Approval</b> |
|-------------------------|---|-------------|---|-----------------------|-----------------|
| 2012                    | 83.87%                                    |             | 52/62   | Full with Warning     |                 |
| 2011                    | 74.12%                                    |             | 63/85   | Condition             |                 |
| 2010                    | 70.67%                                    |             | 53/75   | Full with Warning     |                 |
| 2009                    | 73.91%                                    |             | 17/23   | Full                  |                 |
| 2008                    | 100%                                      |             | 23/23   | Full                  |                 |

Background:

- The VN program at Kaplan College has had three (3) difficult years with a low pass rate, changes in director, and high turnover in faculty.
- Changes in the curriculum and in remedial programs to assist students in the learning experience have helped the program move back toward success.

Summary of the Survey Visit:

- The Program Evaluator surmised that the faculty are currently working on implementing the DECs into a nationally-driven curriculum.
- She also identified a need for more space for faculty offices as well as for classrooms and labs.
- The administration demonstrated their strong support for the program.

**Pros and Cons:**

Pros:

- The program has a knowledgeable and committed program director and faculty with extensive nursing experience.
- There is strong support from administration with open lines of communication with program staff.
- The program currently has an improved NCLEX-PN pass rate with program at BON full approval with warning. This appears to be the result of increased emphasis on critical thinking skills and improved preparation for the licensing exam.
- A wide variety of clinical learning experiences are available for students including clinical practice in mental health agencies.

- Students were very complimentary of the program, the current program director, and the faculty. They indicated they were very proud of the program and felt they were being well prepared for the workplace.

#### Cons:

- The program has recently switched to a national curriculum that does not consistently reflect the DECs. The faculty are engaged in reviewing the curriculum and revising areas to comply with the rule requirement to include the DECS competencies. In addition, the faculty has begun to revise their clinical evaluation tools to use the nursing roles in the DECs as a framework for the new tools.
- Student files did not contain the required signed receipt of BON licensure eligibility information.
- Adequate space for classes, nursing labs, and faculty offices continue to be a major issue. The number of students admitted to the program is partially dependent on the adequacy of the classrooms and especially nursing labs for skills and simulation as well as adequate offices for faculty. Currently space is not adequate for more than the seventy (70) students that are currently enrolled in the program.

#### **Rationale for Staff Recommendation:**

Since Kaplan has moved to a standard national curriculum, it is necessary for the director and faculty to take the time to review and revise the curriculum and the clinical evaluation tools to include the DECs. Board Staff want to encourage this activity and to review the final product by recommending its submission to Staff.

The inclusion of a signed receipt that students have been provided with licensing eligibility information is required by Board rules, and this deficiency will result in a requirement.

The program is poised to increase enrollment when their approval status is moved to full approval. Board Staff recommend that the program examine its physical spaces and number of available faculty before making future decisions about admission times and numbers of students.

#### **Staff Recommendation:**

##### Requirement

The program shall design a receipt to be signed by students when they receive eligibility information and to be kept in the student files. The program shall submit a copy of the receipt to Board Staff no later than December 1, 2013.

##### Recommendations:

1. The director and faculty are encouraged to continue with their task of reviewing and revising the new standard curriculum, including the clinical evaluation tools, to ensure that they reflect the DECs. The director shall submit a sample of the curriculum and the clinical evaluation tools that indicate inclusion of the DECs to Board Staff no later than March 1, 2014.
2. It is recommended that the program study their physical spaces and the number of qualified faculty available before increasing their admissions beyond the current enrollment. The director shall provide the determined enrollment plan to Board Staff by January 1, 2014.  
(See letter in Attachment #2.)

**Summary of Survey Visit  
Kaplan College in Corpus Christi, Texas  
Vocational Nursing Program**

**Purpose of Visit:** routine survey visit

**Date of Visit:** June 27, 2013

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

**Board Surveyor met with:**

- Jeriann Hix, President, Kaplan College, Corpus Christi
- Christine Rios Irizarry, MSN, RN, VN Program Director
- Barbara Rutledge, MSN, RN, Full-time Instructor
- Cathy Claveria, MSN, RN, A & P, Full-time Instructor
- Glorytess Romano, BSN, RN, Full-time Instructor
- Jeffry Mullins, AAS, RN, Full-time Instructor
- VN students

**Board Surveyor:**

- Reviewed the curriculum materials including all syllabi
- Reviewed the VN Student Handbook
- Reviewed the VN Faculty Handbook
- Reviewed the clinical evaluation tools
- Reviewed the total program evaluation plan, conceptual model, and faculty minutes
- Reviewed student assignments and tests
- Reviewed student files, faculty files, and clinical affiliation agreements
- Toured the nursing faculty space, classrooms, and skills labs
- Met with a group of currently enrolled VN students from all three cohorts
- Conducted exit conference

**Summary of Findings**

Philosophy/Mission and Objectives/Outcomes

- The program philosophy and objectives were reviewed in August of 2012 with documentation of this review in the faculty minutes.
- The program will continue to review and revise the system developed curriculum to make it more applicable to the Corpus Christi campus which may result in some adjustments of the philosophy and objectives as well.

Administration and Organization

- There are effective lines of communication with the college administration, the system nursing administrators, and the other Kaplan VN Program in San Antonio.
- There is strong support from the administration regarding enforcement of student policies and all decisions have been supported since the current program director has been in place.
- There was no organizational chart in any of the documents given to the evaluator and none could be found on the Kaplan web site. Program Evaluator suggested an organization chart should be placed in the faculty and student handbooks to illustrate lines of authority and communication.
- The VN Program has comparable status to other programs at Kaplan.

- The program director does have the authority necessary to direct the program in all phases including approval of teaching staff, selection of appropriate clinical sites, admission, progression, probation, dismissal of students, and enforcement of student policies.
- The Program Evaluator suggested that the job description of the Program director is revised to better reflect the requirements in Rule 214 as well as the Education Guideline 3.4.1.b..
- The program director is not required to teach but may substitute if a faculty member has to be absent. Adjunct faculty may also substitute in clinical if a full-time faculty member is absent.

### Faculty

- The faculty organization is described in the Faculty Handbook however, since this school is part of a large corporation there is a lot of collaboration with the Kaplan VN Program in San Antonio as well as the corporate headquarters in Chicago. There are no identified committees at this time with the faculty meeting as a group weekly.
- Salaries are more than sufficient to recruit and retain faculty and this has not been an issue in faculty turnover.
- There is a common space to accommodate faculty. This arrangement makes it difficult to conduct one-on-one student conferences that require privacy. The Program Evaluator was told that the space will be partitioned into separate cubicles for more comfort and efficiency.
- The faculty members meet weekly to discuss various operational issues and they do keep minutes of these meetings. These minutes reflect discussion and decisions with good rationale for the decisions being made. A faculty orientation plan needs to be developed and placed in the faculty handbook.
- The faculty workload is 24 – 28 student contact hours per week. Although the 2012 NEPIS Report indicates there were seven (7) full-time faculty employed in 2012, at the time of the site visit there were four (4) full-time faculty employed (the program director does not carry a teaching load and is therefore not considered faculty) with three (3) adjuncts; one (1) adjunct does both clinical and theory and the two (2) remaining adjuncts taught clinical only.
- The program director (who has approximately ten years full and part time teaching experience) makes the teaching assignments based on each faculty member's education and experience. She has paired inexperienced faculty with more experienced faculty to assist the new faculty in assuming their new role. One full-time faculty has three years teaching experience (all at Kaplan), one full-time faculty has been teaching intermittently for Kaplan for four (4) years, other full and part time faculty were hired in 2012 with no previous teaching experience.
- Every month there is some professional development activity related to teaching for the entire faculty at the Corpus Christi campus. In addition, the nursing faculty are required to participate in four (4) other professional development activities annually.
- Nursing licenses are validated by the Program Director.
- The program director, two (2) full-time faculty, and one (1) adjunct faculty are prepared at the MSN level. One full-time faculty is enrolled in a Master's program and one faculty is enrolled in a BSN program.
- The faculty have complete responsibility for supervising the student's care in the clinical area. The program maintains a one (1) faculty to ten (10) students (or less) ratio. There are four (4) full-time faculty; two (2) have MSNs, one (1) has a BSN, and one (1) has an AAS. There are three (3) part-time faculty; one teaches both theory and clinical and has an MSN, the other two are RNs who teach only clinical.

### Students

- Admission requirements are found in the application packet. The students indicated that admission requirements were clear to them. Kaplan also provides counselors who assist the students in meeting the admission requirements.

- There are admission, dismissal, and progression policies in the Student Handbook, but there are no graduation policies. The dismissal policy does not indicate reasons for dismissal as listed in Rule 214.8(d). There are no specific references to dismissal for actual or potential harm to patients, criminal behavior, or intemperate use of drugs.
- At the time of the site visit there was a total of thirty-six (36) students enrolled; twenty (20) in Cohort 1 and sixteen (16) in Cohort 2. The plans were to admit another thirty-five (35) students in July.
- Students are given the required information regarding licensure eligibility issues in the counseling office as well as in the Student Handbook. However, there were no signed documents in any student's file confirming that students had received the information.
- There are no policies that facilitate or promote mobility or articulation but students indicated that faculty members discuss the need for the students to continue their education.
- Students were very positive about the program and very complimentary of the current program director, faculty, and staff. They are proud of their program and receive positive feedback from the staff in the clinical facilities regarding their preparation.

#### Program of Study

- The curriculum contains eighteen (18) courses that are taught over one (1) year in five (5) quarters. There are 630 class hours, 180 laboratory hours, and 690 clinical hours for a total of 1500 total contact hours.
- In the first quarter of the program, students take a study skills course, a college math course, medical terminology, A&P I and two nursing courses. In the second quarter, the students take A&P II and three (3) nursing courses. During quarters three, four, and five the students take the remaining eight (8) nursing courses.
- When reviewing the course syllabi the Program Evaluator noted that in nearly every course, test scores were slightly more than 50% of the course grade with assignments, participation, and professionalism all being given nearly 50% of the course grade. The Program Evaluator suggested that this approach might create grade inflation.
- A new curriculum was developed by an individual at the corporate office for all VN nursing programs in the Kaplan system and implemented in 2012. Even though their previous curriculum included the DECs, the new curriculum does not consistently reflect the Texas DECs throughout. The Program Evaluator suggested that as the faculty review and revise the curriculum, they make any changes to ensure the inclusion in the DECs. The program has begun revising their clinical evaluation tools and is organizing the tool around the roles of the nurse that are listed in the DECs.
- The program does not offer any courses through distance instruction.

#### Clinical Learning Experiences

- Students have clinical learning experiences in acute care, long term care, long term acute care, skilled nursing units, physician offices, mental health facilities, and clinics.
- Facilities and agencies that are used for clinical learning experiences are evaluated for the types of patients that they admit, the use of LVNs to provide care, and their willingness to provide a positive learning experience for VN students.
- No clinical experience requires the students to travel more than fifty (50) miles from Corpus Christi.
- Faculty make patient assignments the day of the clinical learning experience about thirty (30) minutes before students arrive. Faculty confer with staff in order to correlate patient assignments as well as they can with what is being discussed in classroom lectures.
- Faculty indicated that finding an adequate number of clinical sites was not a problem and that facilities that were being used were anxious to have the students continue to have clinical learning experiences at their facilities.

- Students have some opportunities for simulation experiences but currently there is no organized plan to ensure that each student participates in a specified number of simulation scenarios. With only five (5) nursing skills beds, it is difficult to ensure that one hundred eighty (180) students (the number admitted in the 2011-2012 academic year) participate in a required number of simulation scenarios. Kaplan does not employ a Simulation Specialist. (Student enrollment has been restricted due to the conditional status in 2011.)
- Faculty supervise all direct care learning experiences; the ratio of faculty to students is 1:10 or less.
- The program does not use preceptors but does have some guided observation experiences.

#### Facilities, Resources, and Services

- The facility where the VN Program is located is a large building which houses the entire Kaplan Corpus Christi campus. The facility is in a small shopping center which is near a major expressway so there is easy access to the program. The largest classroom that is a computer classroom large enough to accommodate thirty-five (35) students. The other classrooms are small and able to accommodate the cohorts of sixteen (16) and twenty (20) students currently enrolled, but they could not comfortably accommodate more students. The program has access to larger nursing skills labs when it is not being used by CNA classes but the program's designated lab contains five (5) beds. This number of beds is insufficient for adequate skills practice or simulation participation for the seventy-one (71) students now enrolled.
- The program does have access to high fidelity manikins but because of the lack of space, students are not able to use them in simulations on a routine basis.
- The Program Director requests items to be put in the program budget which would include items asked for by the faculty; the budget is approved by the President of the campus and the corporation.
- The skills laboratory is well stocked with supplies.
- The program does have adequate secretarial support with one administrative assistant.
- The campus provides students with a full array of student support services including job placement and financial aid.

#### Records and Reports

- All confidential files are kept locked and in the VN workroom.
- Student files appear to be complete except for the required signed receipt of Board licensure eligibility information; no student files contained this document.
- Clinical affiliation agreements appear to be up to date.
- Minutes of faculty meetings appear to be up to date and thorough since the current director was employed.

#### Total Program Evaluation

- The Program's Total Program Evaluation (TPE) appears to be comprehensive and contains all areas required by the BON to be evaluated with bench marks cited for most of the criteria. However no data has been entered into the TPE and there is no evidence of review, analysis, and program revisions based on the findings.

DRAFT LETTER

October 21, 2013

Christine Rios-Irizarry, BSN, RN, Director  
Vocational Nursing Education Program  
Kaplan College  
1620 S. Padre Island Dr., Suite 620  
Corpus Christi, Texas 78416

Dear Ms. Rios-Irizarry:

At the October 17-18, 2013 meeting, the members of the Texas Board of Nursing considered the report of the routine survey visit to the Vocational Nursing Program at Kaplan College in Corpus Christi, Texas. It was the decision of the Board to accept the findings from the survey visit and issue the following requirement and recommendations:

Requirement

The program shall design a receipt to be signed by students when they receive eligibility information and to be kept in the student files. The program shall submit a copy of the receipt to Board Staff no later than December 1, 2013.

Recommendations:

1. The director and faculty are encouraged to continue with their task of reviewing and revising the new standard curriculum, including the clinical evaluation tools, to ensure that they reflect the DEC's. The director shall submit a sample of the curriculum and the clinical evaluation tools that indicate inclusion of the DEC's to Board Staff no later than March 1, 2014.
2. It is recommended that the program study their physical spaces and available qualified faculty before increasing their admissions beyond the current enrollment. The director shall provide the determined enrollment plan to Board Staff by January 1, 2014.

(See letter in Attachment #2.)

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: Jeriann Hix, President  
Texas Workforce Commission