

**Report of a Routine Survey Visit
South Texas College, McAllen, Texas
Vocational Nursing Education Program**

Summary of Request

Consider the report of the April 26, 2013, routine six (6) - year survey visit to South Texas College in McAllen, Texas, Vocational Nursing (VN) Education Program. The previous survey visit was conducted in February, 2004.

Historical Perspective:

- South Texas College was established in 1993 as South Texas Community College.
- In 2004, the college name changed to South Texas College.
- The college has campuses in McAllen, Weslaco and Rio Grande City, Texas.
- South Texas College is accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS).
- The South Texas College Vocational Nursing Program began in 1995.
- The NCLEX-PN® pass rates for the past five (5) years are reflected in the table below:

Examination Year	NCLEX-PN® Examination Pass Rate	Number of First Time Candidates (Passed/Total)	BON Approval Status
2012	84.57%	159/183	Full
2011	89.21%	124/139	Full
2010	93.26%	166/178	Full
2009	82.91%	131/158	Full
2008	86.36%	76/88	Full

Summary of Survey Findings (See Attachment #1):

- Board Representative identified many strengths in the program.
- Findings from the survey visit indicate the program is in compliance with Board Rule 214.

Pros and Cons from Survey Visit:

Pros:

- The VN Program Director is an experienced educator and is respected by administration, faculty, students, and the community.
- Longevity and experience of faculty are credited for the integrity of the program.
- Administration expressed support for the VN program, stated that the nursing program adds value to the college and fulfills a continued need for nurses in the communities served.
- The VN education program receives strong support from clinical affiliates based on feedback that indicates graduates are well prepared to practice upon graduation.
- Students interviewed expressed a high degree of satisfaction with the program.
- The program of study incorporates creative methods for course delivery, including frequent communication with faculty, face-to-face instruction, student centered learning activities and utilization of simulation.
- All clinical learning experiences are faculty supervised, with direct-patient care in hands-on clinical settings. The program utilizes simulation to prepare students for clinical practice and for remediation.

- The program utilizes an RN simulation coordinator and an information technology (IT) support staff to assist with learning experiences.
- The program has a number of active contracts with clinical affiliating agencies that provide a wide variety of clinical learning experiences.
- VN graduates are able to obtain employment in the local hospitals and long term care agencies.
- The college provides funds every year for faculty to attend the annual conference of the Texas Association of Vocational Nurse Educators (TAVNE) and other conferences related to education.

Cons:

- The program director and faculty employment contracts are ten and one-half months (10 1/2). Extensions for Summer I and Summer II sessions are considered prior to the summer session. The VN program is twelve (12) months long.

Rationale for Staff Recommendation:

The program meets Rule 214 requirements. The program director and faculty employment contracts are 10.5 months in length, but the VN program is twelve (12) months in length. Ensuring program director and faculty employment over the length of the entire program would provide consistency to the program operation.

Staff Recommendation:

Move to accept the report of findings from the routine six (6) year survey visit to South Texas College VN program in McAllen, Texas and issue one (1) recommendation (see draft letter in Attachment #2).

Recommendation #1:

The College administration is encouraged to consider changing the length of the program director and faculty employment contracts to be consistent with the length of the VN program. Program administration shall submit a written response to this recommendation no later than December 15, 2013.

**Summary of Survey Visit
South Texas College, McAllen, Texas
Vocational Nursing Education Program**

Purpose of Survey visit: Routine six (6) year survey visit

Date of Visit: April 26, 2013

Program Evaluator Conducting Visit: Beverly Skloss, MSN, RN, Contract program evaluator

Program Evaluator met with:

- Juan E. Mejia, Vice-President for Academic Affairs
- Melba Trevino, Dean, Nursing & Allied Health
- Daphine Mora, RN, BSN, MEd, VN Program Director
- Cesar Garcia, RN, Faculty
- Karen Countryman, RN, Faculty
- Carol Pool, RN, Faculty
- Rebecca Miller, RN, Faculty
- Judith De La Cruz, RN, Faculty
- Approximately twenty-five (25) VN students

Program Evaluator:

- Reviewed the curriculum and all syllabi
- Reviewed the Student Handbook and Faculty Handbook
- Reviewed exams and clinical evaluation tools
- Toured McAllen and Weslaco facilities housing the nursing program
- Interviewed approximately twenty-five (25) students
- Held initial conference with director and administration
- Met with five (5) faculty members
- Reviewed records and documents including: student and faculty files, minutes of faculty meetings, and the Total Program Evaluation (TPE) Plan
- Conducted exit interview with director and administration

Summary of Findings

Findings Related to Administration and Organization:

- Administration indicated the nursing program adds value to the college and fulfills a need in the local community, crediting Ms. Mora for her strong leadership and enthusiasm for VN quality education.
- The VN program is in the Division of Nursing & Allied Health which also includes the following programs: associate degree nursing (ADN), emergency medical technology (EMT), health information technology (HIT), medical assistant technology (MA), pharmacy technology, patient care assistant (PCA), occupational therapy assistant (OTA), physical therapy assistant (PTA), radiology technology and respiratory therapy.
- The VN program is also offered at extension sites on the Mid-Valley (Weslaco) and Starr County campuses (Rio Grande City).
- Daphine Mora, RN, BSN, MEd, VN Program Director, has been the director of the VN Program for eleven (11) years.

- Ms. Mora teaches one (1) student success class and is comfortable fulfilling her program director duties.
- The director indicates she has adequate time to fulfill the director responsibilities.
- Ms. Mora commended faculty for their experience, dedication and hard work.
- Clear channels of communication between the director and administration were evident.
- The VN program has comparable status to other education units in the college.
- Program director and faculty employment contracts are ten and one-half (10.5) months with the potential for two (2) extensions for Summer I and Summer II sessions.

Findings Related to Faculty:

- Twenty (20) full-time faculty teach in the VN program with twelve (12) at the McAllen campus, six (6) at the Weslaco extension site and two (2) at the Rio Grande City extension site.
- Three (3) full-time faculty work at multiple sites and there are three (3) adjunct faculty.
- Faculty members possess many years' experience teaching as well as diversity in content expertise and clinical backgrounds.
- Faculty reported they receive strong support from one another, the program director, the Dean and the Vice President for Academic Affairs.
- Faculty members are actively engaged in curriculum planning, implementation, and evaluation.
- Faculty express satisfaction with having a skills lab coordinator which allows adequate time for preparation.
- Faculty has regular meetings. Decision making is collaborative.

Findings Related to Students:

- The program admits one (1) cohort of up to one hundred sixty (160) students annually each August. The number admitted varies based on the number of qualified applicants.
- At the time of the survey visit, one hundred thirty-two (132) students were in the program. One hundred forty-one (141) were admitted in August 2012.
- Students reported they enrolled in the VN program because of the desire to become a nurse, the reputation of the program and availability of enrollment slots.
- Students agreed the program of study is preparing them well for clinical practice and they cited hands-on learning experiences as being the most rewarding part of the program.
- Students discussed the challenges of time management between home responsibilities and school. They cited having multiple student support resources as being important to their success.
- Student policies are well-defined, written, and available to students.
- Student representatives provide input into the development of policies.

Findings Related to Program of Study:

- The twelve (12) month program of study is designed to be completed in four (4) semesters.
- The program is comprised of a total of 1472 clock hours: 576 didactic hours and 896 patient care clinical hours.
- The program of study is well organized and includes all Board required content.
- The organization of the curriculum is based upon simple to complex and designed to ensure students are competent in skills prior to entering the clinical setting.
- *The Differentiated Essential Competencies (DECS) (2010)* have been fully incorporated into the curriculum.
- Standardized testing is used throughout the program for admission, progression, remediation, and graduation purposes.
- Evaluation methods and tools to measure progression are according to Board Rule 214.9 and Board Education Guideline 3.73.a.
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Findings Related to Clinical Learning Experiences:

- The program has active clinical contracts with a number of affiliating agencies that provide rich clinical opportunities for the curriculum.

- A designated coordinator has the responsibility for procuring and maintaining clinical agreements and sites.
- Skills lab and simulation lab activities are also utilized. The simulation lab has both mid- and high-fidelity mannequins.
- Intravenous therapy is taught as part of the clinical learning experiences.
- Faculty provides supervision during all clinical learning experiences.
- Clinical learning experiences are scheduled to correlate with didactic content.
- Criteria for selecting clinical agencies are well-defined.
- The clinical evaluation tools are based upon course content, the DEC's and measure progression of the student throughout the program. Student expectations are detailed and clear.
- Students are well received and have a good reputation among clinical affiliates.

Findings Related to Facilities, Resources, and Services:

- A full array of student services is offered at all three (3) sites.
- A large library and ample computer resources are available at all sites. There are computers in the classrooms as well.
- There is ample, open parking available adjacent to the program building.
- The facilities housing the VN program are conducive to learning, spacious, equipped with numerous classrooms and well equipped skills and simulation labs.
- Media equipment is available in every classroom.
- The program director and full-time faculty are provided with fully furnished private offices.
- The program has full-time clerical and secretarial support.
- The program director and faculty agreed that resources are adequate to meet all teaching needs.
- The facilities include restrooms, faculty and student lounges and lockers, and break areas.
- The VN program classrooms are adequate and include a computer for each student.
- There are adequate mannequins and simulation models for the number of students.

Findings Related to Records and Reports:

- Faculty files provide evidence of faculty qualifications, responsibilities, and faculty evaluations.
- Meeting minutes indicate when decisions are made and are prepared in a legible format.
- Student files contain all documents required by Rule 214.
- Clinical affiliation agreements are up to date.
- Storage of files meets the requirement of Rule 214.

Findings Related to Total Program Evaluation:

- The program has a total evaluation plan that is used for decision making.

DRAFT LETTER

October 17, 2013

Daphine Mora, RN, BSN, MEd, Director
Vocational Nursing Education Program
South Texas College
P. O. Box 9701
McAllen, TX 78501-9701

Dear Ms. Mora,

At the October 17, 2013 meeting, the members of the Texas Board of Nursing considered the report of the routine six (6) - year survey visit to the South Texas College in McAllen, Texas, Vocational Nursing Education Program. It was the decision of the Board to accept the report of the survey visit and issue one (1) recommendation:

Recommendation #1:

The college administration is encouraged to consider changing the length of the program director and faculty employment contracts to be consistent with the length of the VN program. Program administration shall submit a written response to this recommendation no later than December 15, 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) 305-7660.

Sincerely,

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

Sandi Emerson, MSN, RN
Nursing Consultant for Education

Copy: Shirley A. Reed, M.B.A., Ed.D., President, South Texas College
Melba Trevino, Dean, Nursing and Allied Health Division
Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board