

**Report of a Survey Visit
Weatherford College in Weatherford, Texas
Vocational Nursing Education Program**

Summary of Request:

Consider the report of the routine six (6) year survey visit to the Weatherford College in Weatherford, Texas Vocational Nursing Education Program. The visit was conducted on June 4, 2013 by Robin Caldwell, PhD, RN, CLNC, Contract Program Evaluator (see Attachment #1).

Historical Perspective:

- Weatherford College in Weatherford, Texas was established in 1869. The college has branch locations in Granbury, Decatur, Bridgeport, and Mineral Wells.
- The college is accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS), and underwent SACS reaccreditation in 2011.
- The vocational nursing (VN) education program at Weatherford College has been in operation since 1975. The program is offered on the main campus.
- In addition to the VN program, the college offers the following allied health programs: associate degree nursing (ADN); sonography; respiratory care; phlebotomy; radiological technology; occupational therapy assistant; physical therapist assistant; and, substance abuse counseling.
- A new Health Science building is scheduled for completion in May 2014. The two (2) level, 31,000 square foot building will house the nursing programs and other allied health programs. The facilities will include multiple classrooms, multiple skills/simulation labs, a computer lab, and student lounges/study areas. Faculty offices will be located in an adjacent building that is currently undergoing renovations. Directors and faculty have been included in planning of the new building and its spaces.
- Nita Parsons, BSN, RN has served as Director of the VN program since 1999. She had served as faculty in the VN program since 1980.
- The NCLEX-PN® pass rates for the past five (5) years are presented in the following table:

Examination Year	BON Approval Status	NCLEX-PN® Pass Rate	Number of First Time Candidates (Passed/Total)
2012	Full	94.55%	52/55
2011	Full	94.59%	35/37
2010	Full	98.08%	51/52
2009	Full	93.44%	57/61
2008	Full	95.83%	46/48

Summary of Survey Visit:

- Findings from the survey visit indicate that the program is in compliance with all aspects of Board Rule 214.

Pros:

- The program's 2012 NCLEX-PN® pass rate is 94.55%.
- The program has a history of success on the licensure examination.
- The program enjoys strong administrative and community support.
- The VN program is scheduled to move to a new Health Science Building in 2014.

- The VN director is a knowledgeable leader and an experienced nurse educator who is respected by faculty, students, and administration.
- The program has a stable and committed director and faculty.
- The director and faculty have established good relationships with clinical affiliates to provide exceptional clinical learning experiences for students.
- VN faculty members are seasoned, well-credentialed, and offer a rich diversity in their educational and experiential backgrounds.
- The faculty appears to be progressive and innovative in their approach to nursing education, and demonstrate a cooperative and collegial spirit that fosters a positive learning environment for students.
- Students interviewed expressed a high degree of satisfaction with the program.
- The VN program is well respected in the community, and graduates are able to obtain employment without difficulty.
- The VN curriculum design facilitates articulation into the Weatherford College ADN program.
- The majority of VN graduates enroll in the ADN program.

Cons:

- The VN program director has major classroom and clinical teaching responsibilities in the program.

Staff Recommendation:

Move to accept the report of the routine six (6) year survey visit to the Weatherford College in Weatherford, Texas Vocational Nursing Education Program (See draft letter in Attachment #2).

**Summary of Survey Visit and Findings
Weatherford College in Weatherford, Texas
Vocational Nursing Education Program**

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

Date of Visit: June 4, 2013

Board Representative Conducting Visit: Robin Caldwell, PhD, RN, CLNC, Contract Program Evaluator

Board Representative met with:

- Kevin Eaton, EdD, President Weatherford College
- Richard Bowers, EdD, Vice-President of Instruction
- Katherine Boswell, MS, RN, Dean, Health and Human Sciences
- Nita Parsons, BSN, RN, Vocational Nursing (VN) Program Director
- Cindy Turner, MSN, RN, VN Faculty
- April Adair, RN, VN Faculty
- Ellie Broughton, MSN, RN, MPH, VN Faculty
- Mandy Hardey, BSN, RN, VN Faculty
- Kathy McKenzie, LVN, VN Faculty
- Christy Walker, RN, VN Faculty
- Karen Long, Administrative Assistant
- Twenty-four (24) VN students

Board Representative:

- Conducted an opening meeting with the program director and administration;
- Met with faculty and students;
- Observed student practice in the nursing skills lab;
- Reviewed curriculum materials including all syllabi;
- Reviewed faculty and student handbooks;
- Reviewed clinical evaluation tools;
- Reviewed student assignments and tests;
- Reviewed clinical affiliation agreements;
- Reviewed records and files;
- Reviewed Total Program Evaluation (TPE) plan and minutes;
- Toured facilities housing the nursing program, including nursing offices, classrooms, and skills lab;
- Toured Weatherford College Campus; and,
- Conducted an exit interview with the program director, faculty, and administration.

Summary of Findings:

Philosophy/Mission and Objectives/Outcomes:

- The director and faculty have fully integrated *The Differentiated Essential Competencies for Graduates of Texas Nursing Programs (DECs) (2010)* into all aspects of the curriculum.
- A Total Program Evaluation (TPE) is in place, and includes a plan for faculty to regularly review the program's philosophy and objectives.

Administration and Organization:

- The organizational chart demonstrates lines of communication, responsibility, and authority between the nursing program and administration and within the nursing program.
- Administration (Dr. Eaton, Dr. Bowers, and Ms. Boswell) are involved through their support and assistance in promoting the success of the nursing programs.
- Administration reported the following: nursing is one of the college's largest programs; the VN program is well respected in the community; and, graduates are able to obtain employment in the local area without difficulty.
- Nita Parsons, BSN, RN, was appointed program director for the VN program in 1999. She had served as faculty in the VN program since 1980.
- The director and administration enthusiastically discussed the new Health Science building scheduled for completion in May 2014. The plans call for a two (2) level, 31,000 square foot building that will house the nursing programs and other allied health programs. The plans include multiple classrooms, multiple skills/simulation labs, a computer lab, and student lounges/study areas. Faculty offices will be located in an adjacent building that is currently undergoing renovations. Directors and faculty have been included in planning of the new building and its spaces.
- Ms. Parsons reported having major classroom and clinical teaching assignments that makes it difficult to fulfill her duties and responsibilities as program director.

Program of Study:

- The twelve (12) month VN program is designed to be completed in three (3) semesters.
- Nursing Education Program Information Summary (NEPIS) data indicate a total of 1520 contact hours in the program of study: 560 didactic; 0 computer lab; 96 skills lab; 120 simulation lab; and, 744 patient care clinical hours.
- The program of study is well organized and includes numerous check points to determine the level of achievement of students along the curriculum. Planned remediation is in place.
- The teaching model is based upon face-to-face instruction combined with online experiences. Select didactic courses are offered online.
- Faculty members have demonstrated competencies in distance education and students have been oriented to online learning. IT support is available.
- The DECs have been fully incorporated into the curriculum.
- The curriculum is designed to ensure that students are competent in skills prior to entering the clinical setting.
- Intravenous (IV) therapy is taught in the last semester.
- Standardized testing is used throughout the program for progression, remediation, and graduation purposes.
- The program utilizes NCLEX blueprinting. Faculty members have received training in test construction and item analysis.
- The VN curriculum facilitates a smooth transition into the Weatherford College ADN program.
- According to the director, the majority of VN graduates enroll in the ADN program.

Faculty:

- Five (5) full-time RN faculty members and one (1) full-time LVN faculty provide the VN instruction.
- The director reported that faculty turnover rates in the program are low. There were no vacant faculty positions at the time of the survey visit.
- The current faculty has been employed for a time period ranging from two (2) to twenty (20) years.
- The director credited a stable, cohesive faculty for much of the success in the program.
- All faculty members were available for interview.
- VN faculty is seasoned, well-credentialed, and offers a rich diversity in their educational and experiential backgrounds.
- Faculty is actively engaged in curriculum planning, implementation, and evaluation.
- Faculty discussed innovative teaching strategies recently implemented, including the use of

standardized patients in a simulated clinical environment.

- Faculty appears to be progressive and creative in their approach to nursing education, and demonstrates a cooperative and collegial spirit that fosters a positive learning environment for students.
- Faculty reported that professional development opportunities offered by the college are adequate, and includes funding to attend the annual Texas Association of Vocational Nursing Educators (TAVNE) conference.
- Several faculty members expressed a desire to pursue advanced degrees, and indicated that the addition of tuition reimbursement benefits would facilitate their ability to do so.
- Faculty agreed that work loads are reasonable and salaries are adequate. Faculty articulated appreciation for the support they receive from one another, the program director, and administration.
- A review of the faculty handbook and faculty files revealed that all Board required policies are in place.
- Faculty communicates frequently, and meets as a group bi-monthly. Decision making is collaborative and minutes are maintained.

Students:

- The program admits two (2) cohorts of students yearly, one (1) in January and one (1) in August of each year.
- According to the director, the program currently has the faculty and resources to admit seventy (70) students annually.
- In January 2013, thirty-five (35) students were admitted from an applicant pool of 125 qualified candidates, and in August 2013, thirty-three (33) students were admitted from an applicant pool of 100 qualified candidates.
- Forty-seven (47) students are currently enrolled in the program.
- The director stated that attrition rates in the VN program are historically between 30-35%. She attributed attrition primarily to students' outside work responsibilities and lack of preparedness for the rigors of nursing education.
- Twenty-four (24) VN students that are scheduled to graduate in August 2013 were available for interview.
- Students reported they enrolled in the program because of location, NCLEX-PN® pass rates, and the reputation of the program.
- Students' described their experiences in the program as highly positive.
- Students expressed confidence that the program of study is preparing them well for clinical practice.
- Students were unanimous in their expressions of appreciation for the expertise, caring, commitment, and availability of the VN faculty.
- Students complimented the program assistant as being helpful.
- Comments from students indicated that objectives are clear and there is consistency in expectations and grading among faculty. Students acknowledged the faculty functions well as a team.
- Students agreed they have input into the program, and the faculty and director are responsive to their feedback.
- Students confirmed they received verbal and written declaratory order and eligibility information upon enrolling in the program.
- The majority of students reported intent to seek further education to become registered nurses, and several reported plans to enroll in the Weatherford College ADN program.
- A review of the student handbook and student files confirmed that Board required policies are in place.

Clinical Learning Experiences:

- The program has established and maintained longstanding partnerships with a number of affiliating agencies that provide a variety of clinical experiences for the curriculum. Skills lab activities and clinical simulation are also utilized.
- Faculty has been trained in the use of high-fidelity simulation, and students are oriented to the simulated learning environment.
- A lab coordinator facilitates lab scheduling and maintenance for both the VN and ADN programs.
- Faculty provides responsible supervision for all clinical experiences. Board required ratios are maintained. Clinical preceptors are used in the second and third semesters.
- Clinical evaluation tools indicate progression of expectations across the program and are used for formative and summative evaluations.

Facilities and Resources:

- Current physical facilities are adequate. However, the program is scheduled to move to a new Health Science building in 2014.
- The VN program is currently housed in three (3) separate buildings located in close proximity to one another. The director and faculty offices are located in one building, classrooms in a second, and skills/simulation labs in a third building.
- Facilities include modernly equipped classrooms and skills/simulation labs, a computer lab, fully furnished faculty offices and work areas, student and faculty break areas, and restrooms.
- The director has a large private office that is conveniently located to faculty. The program assistant is located in an adjoining building.
- Comprehensive student services are available on campus for nursing students.
- A large physical library is located on the campus, and students have twenty-four (24) hour access to online library holdings from campus or home.
- Computer resources are located throughout the college and IT support is available to faculty and students.
- The VN program shares one (1) full-time program assistant with the ADN program.
- Locked program files are located in the director's office.

Records and Reports:

- The program has an adequate Total Program Evaluation (TPE) plan and it is used for decision making.
- Minutes from faculty meetings indicate when decisions are made.
- Faculty and student files reviewed contained all Board required documents.

DRAFT LETTER

October 21, 2013

Nita Parsons, BSN, RN, Director
Vocational Nursing Education Program
Weatherford College
225 College Park Drive
Weatherford, TX 76086

Dear Ms. Parsons:

At the October 17-18, 2013 Board meeting, the members of the Texas Board of Nursing considered a report of the June 4, 2013 routine survey visit to the Weatherford College in Weatherford, Texas Vocational Nursing Education Program. The program was found to be in compliance with all aspects of Rule 214. Therefore, it was the decision of the Board to accept the report of the survey visit.

If you have any questions or we may provide assistance, please contact Board Staff at Virginia.ayars@bon.texas.gov or 512-305-7660.

Sincerely,

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

Virginia D. Ayars, EdD, MS, RN
Nursing Consultant for Education

Copy: Kevin Eaton, EdD, President
Katherine Boswell, MS, RN, Dean Health and Human Sciences