

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

Summary of Request

Consider the report of the December 1-2, 2015 focused survey visit to the Houston Community College (HCC) Vocational Nursing (VN) Education Program in Houston, Texas. The survey visit was conducted by Janice I. Hooper, PhD, RN, FRE, CNE, FAAN, and Beverly Skloss, MSN, RN, Contract Program Evaluator.

Historical Perspective:

- The VN Program at HCC began in 1951.
- The VN Program uses a face-to-face instruction model with selected nursing courses as blended/hybrid nursing courses (partially online and partially face-to-face).
- The twelve (12) month program offers two (2) admission points each year in January and August.
- The NCLEX-PN® pass rates for the past five (5) years are reflected in the table below:

Examination Year	BON Approval Status	NCLEX-PN® Examination Pass Rate	Number of First Time Candidates (Passed/Total)
2014	Full	68.07%	81/119
2013	Full	92.19%	59/64
2012	Full	93.22%	55/59
2011	Full	87.93%	51/58
2010	Full	91.53%	54/59

- The VN Program was required to submit a Self-Study Report in 2015 due to the 2014 examination pass rate of 68.07%.
- In the Self-Study Report, the Program Director and faculty identified the following areas for correction:
 - Inadequate admission and readmission policies; and
 - High faculty turnover.
- The December 1-2, 2015 survey visit to the Houston Community College Associate Degree Nursing Education Program was expanded to include the VN Program to evaluate the success of corrective measures implemented this year. The 2015 examination pass rate for VN Programs will be determined following the end of the examination year (January 1-December 31, 2015).

Summary of Survey Findings (See Attachment #1)

Pros and Cons from Survey Visit:

Pros:

- Administration stated their full support for the VN program as it fulfills a continued need for nurses in the community.
- Faculty are highly qualified and experienced to provide successful instruction.
- There are opportunities for graduating students in the employment settings in Houston.

Cons:

- Though the VN program has curriculum documents in place and is vigilant in their efforts to be in compliance with Board rules, the clinical evaluation tools can be further developed with greater consistency and clearer progression of clinical objectives.
- The Total Program Evaluation is formatted for nursing accreditation by the Accreditation Commission for Education in Nursing (ACEN), but could be more useful if they had a focus on the effectiveness of various aspects of the program to guide improvement.
- Faculty salaries are considered to be a barrier to recruiting qualified nursing faculty.

Staff Rationale:

Board Staff have provided the following rationale for the recommendations in the attached letter.

Staff Rationale for Recommendation #1:

Related to statute allowing an expansion of dual credit high school tracks in Texas, a number of VN programs (including HCC) are considering including nursing in the available tracks. Board Staff have met with other regulatory agencies, Texas Education Association, Texas Workforce Commission, and Texas Higher Education Board to ensure that proper notifications and approvals are addressed to ensure protecting the public and offering successful opportunities for students when dual credit tracks in nursing are offered.

Recommendation #1:

The Administration and Program are encouraged to evaluate the program resources as new initiatives (such as dual credit high school) are considered to ensure that the primary focus remains on current tracks and that there is careful planning for new developments.

Staff Rationale for Recommendation #2:

In the past, it has been difficult to hire qualified faculty due to low salaries. When the program experiences faculty vacancies or a need for additional faculty, there is a concern that salaries might be a barrier to attracting qualified candidates.

Recommendation #2:

The Administration should review faculty salaries to ensure their adequacy to hire qualified nursing faculty.

Staff Recommendation:

Move to accept the report of the survey visit to the Houston Community College Vocational Nursing Education Program in Houston, Texas and issue the recommendations in the attached letter (Attachment #2).

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

Purpose of Survey visit: Focused following Self-Study Report

Date of Visit: December 1-2, 2015

Board Representative Conducting Visit: Janice I. Hooper, PhD, RN, FRE, CNE, FAAN, and Beverly Skloss, MSN, RN, Contract Program Evaluator

Board Representatives met with Administration:

- Dr. Phillip Nicotera, President
- Dr. Gary Kesling, Dean
- Dr. Kimberly Beatty, Vice-Chancellor of Instructional Services
- Dr. Joanna Kile, Associate Interim Vice Chancellor of Workforce Instruction and Division of Extended Learning
- Thom Ronk, Curriculum Support and Research Manager
- Dr. Patricia Vgwu, Dean of Student Services
- Dr. Diana Castillo, College Operations

Board Representatives:

- Met with Deborah Simmons-Johnson, MSN, RN, Program Director
- Met with the following nursing faculty:
 - Mary Lockett, MSN, RN
 - Charmaine Lewinson-Evan, MSN, RN
 - Harriet Adedoyin-Tuyo, MSN, RN
 - Cheryl Brent, BSN, RN
 - Linda Lackey, EdD, BSN, RN
 - Latona Banks, ADN, RN
 - Pamela Patterson, BSN, RN
- Reviewed the curriculum and all syllabi;
- Reviewed the Student Handbook and Faculty Handbook;
- Reviewed exam questions and clinical evaluation tools;
- Reviewed the Self-Study Report;
- Reviewed data in the 2015 Nursing Education Program Information Survey (NEPIS) and faculty profile;
- Interviewed seven (7) VN students;
- Toured program facilities;
- Observed a class in session;
- Reviewed minutes of faculty meetings and the Total Program Evaluation Plan; and
- Conducted exit interview with Administrators, Program Directors, and faculty.

Summary of Findings:

Administration:

- Many of the administrators are new in their positions, but they all expressed a strong support for the VN Program.
- Deborah Simmons-Johnson, MSN, RN, has been Program Director for ten (10) years.
- The nursing programs are located in the Coleman College for Health Sciences that includes numerous health science programs. Construction for a new ten-story addition is planned across the street from the present building that will provide expanded classrooms and laboratories including simulation labs.

Program of Study:

- The twelve (12) month program of study is designed to be completed in three (3) semesters, using face-to-face and online deliveries.
- The Program is seeking the best arrangement of prerequisite and support courses in the curriculum and plans to rearrange some courses in the curriculum.
- *The Differentiated Essential Competencies (DECs) (2010)* are included within the syllabi, but their application to progression of clinical objectives is not clear.
- Standardized testing is used throughout the program for admission, progression, remediation, and readiness for the NCLEX-PN® examination.
- Information in the NEPIS indicated that the program is interested in pursuing a track for dual credit high school students as well as for an admission point for military personnel returning to the states.

Faculty:

- Seven (7) full-time faculty teach in the VN program.
- The faculty group are highly qualified and experienced in all clinical areas.
- Board Representatives reviewed a set of written faculty policies and guidelines for faculty, but did not see the Faculty Handbook itself.
- The faculty members currently have regular meetings and a set of minutes were available for review. Board Representatives suggest that minutes better demonstrate that faculty decisions are made based upon evaluation data.
- A faculty development policy is in place and faculty records contain documentation of numerous faculty development activities in all areas. A number of nursing faculty commented that they will be attending a national nursing workshop in January 2016.
- Administration stated that additional funding is being provided for faculty development.
- Currently one (1) vacant faculty position exists. Any program growth would necessitate hiring more faculty but this has been difficult in recent years. Low salaries seem to be an issue.

Students:

- The program admits two (2) cohorts annually, in January and August, with a maximum capacity of sixty (60) students per cohort. The number admitted varies based on the number of qualified applicants.
- The 2015 NEPIS reported an enrollment of 193 students.
- Students reported they enrolled in the VN program because of the reputation and location.
- Students described their recent clinical experiences, and most of the students interviewed have job offers following graduation.
- The students who were interviewed represented a wide international range (students from Mexico, Pakistan, Nigeria, El Salvador, and America).
- HCC attracts a higher percentage of male students when compared to the national average.

- Most of the students expressed their plan to continue their nursing education in the future.

Clinical Learning Experiences:

- The program provides hands-on patient care opportunities for all required clinical settings: maternal and pediatric care, long term care, acute care, and community care.
- Skills lab and simulation lab activities are fully utilized, and one (1) lab is shared with the Associate Degree Nursing Education Program.
- Faculty provide supervision during all clinical learning experiences and maintains Board required ratios.
- Clinical learning experiences are scheduled to correlate with didactic content.
- The clinical evaluation tools differ across courses and Board Representatives suggested moving toward a common tool with progression across the curriculum.

Facilities, Resources, and Services:

- A full array of student services is offered on the campus.
- Classrooms are well-lit, spacious, and conducive to learning.
- Skills and simulation labs are large and are constantly in use.
- Media equipment is available for every classroom.
- Offices for the Program Director and faculty are appropriate for a comfortable work environment with privacy for counseling students.
- The many open areas in the building invite students to study individually or in groups throughout the building.

Records and Reports:

- The program has a Total Program Evaluation (TPE) Plan that is designed according to the Accreditation Commission for Education in Nursing (ACEN). Though it appropriately indicates compliance with accreditation standards and Board rules, it has limited use for evaluating the effectiveness of the criteria to promote quality improvement.
- Meeting minutes indicate faculty involvement but decision making based upon evaluation data is limited.

DRAFT LETTER

January 25, 2016

Deborah Simmons-Johnson, MSN, RN
Program Director
Vocational Nursing Education Program
Houston Community College
1900 Pressler St.
Houston, Texas 77030

Dear Ms. Simmons-Johnson,

At the January 21-22, 2016 meeting, members of the Texas Board of Nursing considered the report of the December 1-2, 2015 survey visit to the Houston Community College Vocational Nursing Education Program in Houston, Texas. It was the decision of the Board to accept the report of the survey visit and issue the following recommendation:

Recommendation #1:

The Administration and Program are encouraged to evaluate the program resources as new initiatives (such as dual credit high school) are considered to ensure that the primary focus remains on current tracks and that there is careful planning for new developments.

Recommendation #2:

The Administration should review faculty salaries to ensure their adequacy to hire qualified nursing faculty.

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 any questions or if we may be of assistance, please contact Board Staff at Janice.hooper@bon.texas.gov or 512-305-6814.

Sincerely,

Katherine A. Thomas, MN, RN, FAAN
Executive Director

Copy: Dr. Phillip Nicotera, President