

**Consideration of Change in Approval Status
From Initial Approval with Warning to Full Approval and
Consideration of Report of Survey Visit
Vocational Nursing Institute, Inc. in Houston, Texas
Vocational Nursing Education Program**

Summary of Request:

Consider the proposed change in approval status for the Vocational Nursing Institute, Inc. (VNI) Vocational Nursing (VN) Education Program in Houston, Texas, from Initial Approval with Warning to Full Approval based upon the 2016 NCLEX-PN® examination pass rate, findings from the 2015 Self-Study Report, findings from the March 1, 2017 focused survey visit, and areas for improvement to align with Rule 214.

Historical Perspective:

- The VNI VN Program was approved at the April 2012 Board meeting and enrolled the first cohort of students in September 2012.
- Kimberley Kelly, MSN, RN was approved to serve as Program Director in December 2015 and meets all requirements of Board Rule 214.6.
- The NCLEX-PN® examination pass rates for the past three years are included in the table below:

Examination Year	BON Approval Status	NCLEX-PN® Examination Pass Rate	Number of First Time Candidates (Passed/Total)
2016	Initial with Warning	100%	2/2
2015	Initial	50%	3/6
2014	Initial	20%	1/5
2013	New Program	NA	NA

- Due to the 2014 NCLEX-PN® examination pass rate of 20%, the Program Director and faculty were required to submit a Self-Study Report (SSR) in 2015 that would evaluate factors that may have contributed to the graduates' performance on the NCLEX-PN® examination and a description of the corrective measures to be implemented.
- The Program Director and faculty members identified multiple issues in the SSR that may have contributed to the NCLEX-PN® pass rate falling below 80%, and the need for the following corrective measures, including:
 - earlier intervention and remediation;
 - post-graduate NCLEX-PN® preparation;
 - increased alignment of didactic content and clinical learning experiences;

- ongoing faculty development; and
- integration of more nursing skills lab activities.
- In April 2016, the Board changed the approval status of the VN program from Initial Approval to Initial Approval with Warning, and issued a requirement for a survey visit.
- A focused survey visit to the VNI VN Program was conducted on March 1, 2017 pursuant to the April 21, 2016 Board Order. The survey visit was conducted by Beverly Skloss, MSN, RN, Contract Program Evaluator.

Summary of Survey Findings (See Attachment #1)

Pros and Cons from Survey Visit:

Pros:

- A wide array of clinical affiliates is available for clinical learning experiences.
- Faculty implemented the corrective measures described in the 2015 Self-Study Report; resultantly, the preliminary 2016 NCLEX-PN® pass rate for first-time candidates is 100%.
- Faculty attendance at the annual Texas Association of Vocational Nurse Educators Conference and other conferences is funded by VNI.
- Students receive individualized attention and close monitoring until they take the licensure examination.
- Students are provided remediation and additional tutoring as part of the student enhancement services.

Cons:

- Course syllabi lack consistency throughout the curriculum.
- Clinical evaluation tools do not have clearly stated criteria for students to understand clinical progression expectations.

Rationale for Recommendation:

The program has demonstrated a pass rate for first-time candidates of at least 80% on the 2016 NCLEX-PN® examination and is currently in full compliance with Rule 214.

Staff Recommendation:

Move to change the approval status for the Vocational Nursing Institute, Inc. Vocational Nursing Education Program in Houston, Texas, from Initial Approval with Warning to Full Approval based upon the 2016 NCLEX-PN® examination pass rate, findings from the 2015 Self-Study Report, findings from the March 1, 2017 focused survey visit, and areas for improvement to align with Rule 214, and to accept the report of the March 1, 2017 Survey Visit, as indicated in the attached letter and Board Order (See Attachment #2).

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

Purpose of Survey Visit: Focused Visit in Response to the April 21, 2016 Board Order

Date of Visit: March 1, 2017

Board Representative Conducting Visit: Beverly Skloss, MSN, RN, Contract Program Evaluator

Board Representative met with Administration and Faculty:

- Kimberley Kelly, MSN, RN, Vocational Nursing Institute (VNI) Program Director
- Kerri Robinson, RN, Faculty
- Tally Breitstein, BSN, RN, Faculty
- Carol Hatcher, BSN, RN, Faculty
- Robin Christie, Administrative Assistant

Board Representative:

- Reviewed:
 - curriculum with all syllabi;
 - Student Handbook and Faculty Handbook;
 - Academic Catalog;
 - exams, assignments, and clinical evaluation tools;
 - clinical affiliation agreements;
 - budget and organizational chart;
 - 2016 Nursing Education Program Information Survey (NEPIS) and Faculty Profile;
 - records and documents including: student and faculty files, minutes of faculty meetings, and the Total Program Evaluation (TPE) Plan with data;
- Interviewed 11 Vocational Nursing (VN) students;
- Toured program facilities;
- Observed a class in session; and
- Conducted exit interview with Program Director, faculty, and staff.

Summary of Findings:

Administration and Organization:

- The school is overseen by an eight-member Board of Directors.
- Kimberley Kelly, MSN, RN is the Board approved VN Program Director. She is also President of the VNI Board of Directors.
- Ms. Kelly is qualified to administer the program and meet all the requirements of Rule 214.6.
- Ms. Kelly engages in team teaching strategies in two courses and has the authority to direct the program in all phases.
- Salaries are sufficient to recruit and retain qualified faculty.

Program of Study:

- The program consists of 1664 total clock hours (61 credit hours) with a three semester academic year: 612 Didactic hours, 1052 Clinical hours (522 Clinical, 530 Lab).
- The program is comprehensive and based upon sound educational principles.

- The curriculum fully incorporates the *Differentiated Essential Competencies (DECs) for Graduates of Texas Nursing Programs*.
- Standardized testing is used throughout the program for progression, remediation, and to determine readiness for the NCLEX-PN® examination.
- Clinical learning experiences are aligned with didactic content.
- Administration and program staff have identified the need for increased rigor of the admission criteria and academic passing standards.
- An early intervention remediation program has been implemented across the curriculum.
- Board Staff observed classroom teaching consisting of lecture with audiovisual technology utilized. Students appeared to be attentive and engaged.
- Course syllabi are consistent in format; however, the Board Program Evaluator identified inconsistencies in language related to focused assessments and criteria for student assignments.
- Medical Surgical I and II incorporate disease and control prevention into the course content.
- Due to high demand, the school plans to start a part-time evening program in the Fall that will include Saturday clinical learning experiences.

Faculty:

- There are one full-time faculty and five part-time faculty. The majority of faculty members are experienced nurse educators.
- The Faculty Handbook and policies are detailed and well-written including orientation for new faculty.
- Faculty stated they feel supported by administration and have the time and resources to accomplish their work.
- Faculty indicated they are provided adequate opportunities for faculty development such as conferences, on-site and off-site, as well as time to obtain continuing competencies related to clinical practice.
- Faculty are engaged in regular committee meetings. Decision-making is reflected in the meeting minutes.
- Faculty evaluations are based on self-evaluation, administrative evaluation, and student evaluations.
- Faculty also have the opportunity to evaluate all aspects of the program.

Students:

- At the time of the survey visit, 11 students were enrolled in the program.
- Two students will re-enter the program in March in the Nutrition course and one student will re-enter in May in the Medical-Surgical Nursing course.
- The program admits one cohort per year in the Fall.
- Student policies are well-written and detailed.
- All students receive remediation, have access to tutoring, and are provided additional assistance as needed.
- Each student's progress is closely monitored to promote success. Communication with students is continuous to assess and guide them throughout the program.
- Students expressed feeling supported by faculty and staff.
- Students have input into the curriculum and program via faculty, program, and facilities evaluations.
- They stated they feel that VNI provides most tools and resources needed for student success.
- Students expressed they like the small class size because it gives them opportunities for more one-to-one interaction with faculty.
- They articulated a desire for increased access to the computer lab and classroom for studying as well as Wi-Fi availability for use in the classroom.

Clinical Learning Experiences:

- Prior to on-site clinical learning experiences, students practice in the nursing skills lab and participate in low and mid simulation labs containing four adult mannequins and one pediatric mannequin.
- All clinical learning experiences correlate with didactic content.
- Clinical learning experiences and sites are appropriate to vocational nursing education and are diverse.
- Students are evaluated by faculty and receive formative evaluations on a daily basis as well as a summative evaluation at the end of each course. Progression is indicated on the completed evaluations. However, the Program Evaluator suggested more clarity is needed for students to better understand the grading criteria. The Program Director timely changed the evaluation tools to reflect the recommendation from the Program Evaluator.
- Faculty supervise students in all clinical settings. Preceptors are not utilized.
- Faculty stated that clinical site staff shared they appreciate the level of participation from VNI VN students.

Facilities, Resources, and Services:

- A full array of student services is provided online and face-to-face.
- Students have 24-hour access to adequate online resources and computer assistance.
- The nursing program is currently housed in one building with ample parking.
- Classrooms are adequate, well-lit, and conducive to learning. Media equipment is utilized by faculty.
- The skills lab is sufficient and equipped with low and mid fidelity mannequins for teaching use by faculty.
- A computer room and study area are available to students during regular program operating hours.
- The facility includes restrooms, a breakroom for students, and a breakroom for faculty.
- The Program Director and full-time faculty have private offices. Part-time faculty share space and all areas are appropriate for a comfortable work environment with privacy for counseling students.
- Several administrative assistants provide support to the Program Director and faculty.

Records and Reports:

- Faculty files provide evidence of faculty qualifications, responsibilities, and faculty evaluations.
- The TPE plan is being used for decision-making as reflected in faculty meeting minutes.
- Clinical affiliation agreements are signed and current.
- Faculty and student records are in order and compliant with Board Rule 214.12.

DRAFT LETTER

April 24, 2017

Kimberley Kelly, MSN, RN, Director
Vocational Nursing Education Program
The Vocational Nursing Institute, Inc.
11201 Steeple Park Drive
Houston, TX 77065

Dear Ms. Kelly:

At the April 20-21, 2017 meeting, members of the Texas Board of Nursing (Board) discussed the approval status of the Vocational Nursing Institute, Inc. Vocational Nursing Education Program in Houston, Texas, based upon the 2016 NCLEX-PN® examination pass rate, findings from the 2015 Self-Study Report, findings from the March 1, 2017 focused survey visit, and areas for improvement to align with Rule 214.

Based upon the discussion and review of information, it was the decision of the Board to change the approval status of the Vocational Nursing Institute, Inc. Vocational Nursing Education Program in Houston, Texas, from Initial Approval with Warning to Full Approval as indicated in the attached Board Order.

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

Sincerely,

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

Copy: Texas Workforce Commission

BEFORE THE TEXAS BOARD OF NURSING

ORDER OF THE BOARD

In the Matter of
The Vocational Nursing Institute, Inc.
Vocational Nursing Education Program
In Houston, Texas

A public meeting of the Texas Board of Nursing, hereinafter referred to as the Board, was held on April 20, 2017, 333 Guadalupe, Tower II, Room 225, Austin, Texas, to consider the approval status of the Vocational Nursing Institute, Inc. Vocational Nursing Education Program in Houston, Texas, pursuant to Section 301.157, Texas Occupations Code and 22 Tex. Admin. Code Chapter 214, based upon the 2016 NCLEX-PN® examination pass rate, findings from the 2015 Self-Study Report, findings from the March 1, 2017 focused survey visit, and areas for improvement to align with Rule 214.

After review and due consideration of the filed materials, as well as the presentation by representatives from the Vocational Nursing Institute, Inc. in Houston, Texas, and other interested parties, if any, the Board hereby CHANGES the approval status of the Vocational Nursing Institute, Inc. Vocational Nursing Education Program in Houston, Texas from INITIAL APPROVAL WITH WARNING to FULL APPROVAL.

Entered this 20th day of April, 2017

Katherine A. Thomas, MN, RN, FAAN
Executive Director
On Behalf of the Texas Board of Nursing