

**Report of Survey Visit
South Texas College in McAllen, Texas
Associate Degree Nursing Education Program**

Summary of Request:

Consider the report of the October 11-12, 2016 survey visit to South Texas College (STC) Associate Degree Nursing (ADN) Education Program in McAllen, Texas, including a status visit focusing on the Innovative Professional Nursing Education Pilot Program ADN Education Program (Dual Credit High School). The last survey visit to the STC ADN Education Program was conducted in August 2013.

Historical Perspective:

- South Texas College was established in 1993 as South Texas Community College. In 2004, the College's name changed to South Texas College. STC is accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS).
- The STC ADN Program began in 1998. The program received Full Approval by the Board in 2001 after their first cohort graduated and met the benchmark on the NCLEX-RN® examination.
- Christie M. Candelaria, Ed.D, RN, CCRN-K has been the Program Director since August 2015. She has over nineteen (19) years of experience in professional nursing education, thirteen (13) of them at STC.
- The current ADN Education Program is within the Department of Nursing and Allied Health, which offers numerous health care programs including: Emergency Medical Technology, Health and Medical Administrative Services, Medical Assistant Technology, Patient Care Assistant, Pharmacy Technology, Occupational Therapy Assistant, Physical Therapy Assistant, Radiologic Technology, Respiratory Therapy, and Vocational Nursing.

The ADN NCLEX-RN® 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) |
|-------------------------|----------------------------------|--|---|
| 2016 | Full | 86.58% | 129/149 |
| 2015 | Full- Self Study Report Required | 79.47 % | 151/190 |
| 2014 | Full | 80.21% | 150/187 |
| 2013 | Full | 88.33% | 159/180 |
| 2012 | Full | 92.90% | 144/155 |

Tracks in the ADN Program:

- There are four (4) tracks for admission into the ADN Program:
 - The generic or traditional track for unlicensed students – two (2) cohorts admitted each year;
 - The paramedic-to-ADN track – one (1) cohort admitted each year,
 - The LVN-to-ADN – two (2) cohorts admitted each year; and
 - **The Dual Credit High School Track**, which was approved by the Board as an Innovative Pilot Project at the July 2015 Board meeting.
 - The Innovative Pilot Program began in January 2016 with fifteen (15) students. It was planned to be a twenty-four (24) month program, however, due to delays, will be completed in seventeen (17) months for this cohort of students. At the time of the survey visit, there were ten (10) students remaining in the project. The three (3) high school students who were not successful may re-apply to the ADN program after graduation from high school.
 - During the survey visit, Board Staff met with the ten (10) remaining high school students in the dual credit track. The students provided a Power Point presentation about their progress through the program.
 - Board Staff interviewed the high school students who stated that the program has been a positive experience in learning to care for patients. When asked about their future plans, five (5) students said they plan to stay in nursing, while five (5) are unsure of their future careers.
 - Students recognized that the pace of the program is demanding and that it is not for all high school students. The students are managing their regular high school course load, as well as the nursing courses. The students shared they had to sacrifice some regular high school activities (prom, sports, band) though they were not regretful.
 - Students are expected to graduate in May, 2017.
- Current enrollment in the four (4) tracks consists of:

| Generic Track | LVN-to-ADN Track | Paramedic-to-ADN Track | Dual Credit High School Track | Total ADN Enrollment |
|----------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 339 | 69 | 17 | 10 | 435 |

Findings in the Self-Study Report;

The Self-Study Report developed in 2016 identified areas of improvement and the program implemented measures to correct factors that may have contributed to the 2015 NCLEX-RN® examination pass rate of 79.47%, including:

- Revising admission, readmission, and progression policies;
- Recruiting additional faculty;
- Providing faculty development and faculty orientation;
- Focusing on teaching critical thinking;
- Correcting inconsistencies in clinical evaluation; and
- Reevaluating the use of standardized examinations.

Summary of Survey Findings (See Attachment #1):

- A survey visit was conducted to the ADN Nursing Education Program at South Texas College on October 11-12, 2016 by Susan Lee, PhD, RN, CNE, and Janice I. Hooper, PhD, RN, FRE, CNE, FAAN, ANEF.

Pros and Cons from Survey Visit:**Pros:**

- The college provides funds every year for faculty to attend conferences and workshops to fulfill professional development needs and to enhance teaching strategies.
- Students acknowledged the strong clinical component in the program.
- The simulation and skills labs have a full-time coordinator, a simulation specialist, and a lab assistant, greatly enhancing the clinical preparation experiences and freeing faculty to concentrate on instruction.
- While the current lab equipment may not be sufficient, a simulation hospital is currently under construction as part of the Dr. Ramiro R. Casso Nursing and Allied Health Campus Expansion. The four-story, 90,000 square foot facility is slated to be complete in February 2018, and will include new labs, the hospital simulation center, and a new library.
- As a result of changes made following the Self-Study analysis, the program is experiencing a higher level of success reflected by the 2016 NCLEX-RN® pass rate for first-time candidates of 86.58% (129/149).

Cons:

- The Program Director's contract is ten and one-half (10 ½) months rather than twelve (12) months. It is necessary to activate an interim contract to provide director coverage for the entire year.

Rationale for Staff Recommendation:

The Program Director's contract does not provide director coverage for the calendar year even though the administrative activities continue for the full year. Board Staff recommend the Program Director be issued an annual contract for twelve (12) months to provide consistent leadership for the program.

Staff Recommendation:

Move to accept the report of the authorized survey visit to South Texas College Associate Degree Nursing Education Program in McAllen, Texas, and issue one (1) recommendation as noted in the attached letter (see Attachment #2).

Recommendation #1:

College administration is encouraged to issue the Program Director an annual contract extending for the full year. College administration shall submit a written response to this recommendation no later than April 15, 2017.

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

Purpose of Survey visit: Routine survey visit, including Innovative Professional Nursing Education Pilot Project (Dual Credit High School).

Dates of Visit: October 11-12, 2016

Nursing Education Consultants Conducting Visit: Susan Lee, PhD, RN, CNE, and Janice Hooper, PhD, RN, FRE, CNE, FAAN, ANEF.

Nursing Education Consultants met with:

- Shirley A. Reed, MBA, Ed D, President;
- Anahid Petrosian, Ph.D., Interim Vice-President for Academic Affairs;
- Jayson Valerio, DNP, RN, Interim Dean, Nursing & Allied Health Center;
- Christie M. Candelaria, Ed D, RN, CCRN-K, Associate Degree Nursing Program Director;
- Approximately sixteen (16) faculty; and
- Approximately nineteen (19) students.

The Education Consultants:

- Held initial conference with Program Director and administration;
- Reviewed the curriculum and all syllabi;
- Reviewed the Student Handbook, Faculty Handbook, and clinical contracts;
- Reviewed exams and clinical evaluation tools;
- Toured McAllen facilities housing the nursing program;
- Met with nineteen (19) students;
- Interviewed approximately sixteen (16) faculty and staff members;
- Observed classroom instruction;
- Reviewed student and faculty files, minutes of faculty meetings, and the Total Program Evaluation (TPE) Plan;
- Conducted exit interview with Program Director and administration; and,
- Presented results of survey visit in verbal report to Program Director, administration, and faculty.

Summary of Findings:

Administration and Organization:

- Administration indicated the nursing program adds value to the college and fulfills a need in the local community, crediting the Program Director for strong leadership and enthusiasm for quality professional nursing education.
- The Program Director has been the director of the ADN program for over one (1) year and has been a faculty member since 2003. The Program Director indicates the typical workload allows adequate time to fulfill the director responsibilities, but her contract is for ten and one-half (10 ½) months rather than twelve (12) months, requiring interim contracts to cover the remainder of the year.

Program of Study:

- Basic curriculum documents (philosophy, mission) have not been revised since 2010. Faculty were encouraged to review these documents for consistency with the curriculum, adequacy, and currency.
- The ADN program traditional track is twenty-four (24) months with sixty (60) credit hours of study, the LVN to ADN track is twelve (12) months with fifty (50) credit hours plus ten (10) escrow credits awarded upon completion of transition courses, for a total of sixty (60) credit hours of study, and the paramedic to ADN track is twelve (12) months with fifty (50) credit hours plus 10 escrow credits upon completion of transition courses, for a total of sixty (60) credit hours of study.
- The Dual Credit High School ADN track is seventeen (17) months with sixty (60) credit hours of study. All are based on sequential learning.
- The program is well organized and includes all Board required content according to Rule 215.
- The *Differentiated Essential Competencies (DECs) (2010)* have been incorporated into the curriculum.
- The teaching model is based upon face-to-face modalities. There are no online courses.
- The organization of the curriculum is designed to ensure students are competent in safe patient care prior to entering the clinical setting.
- Standardized testing is used throughout the program for admission, progression, remediation, and graduation purposes.
- The revised admission policies have sufficient rigor to ensure that qualified applicants are admitted to the program. Admission criteria include a weighted point system in college level prerequisite courses.
- Evaluation methods and tools to measure progression meet Board Rule 215.9
- The Dual Credit High School ADN program is offered in conjunction with Pharr-San Juan- Alamo (PSJA) High School and Doctor's Hospital at Renaissance.

Faculty:

- Twenty-seven (27) full-time and ten (10) adjunct faculty teach in the ADN program. There are six (6) faculty vacancies. Most faculty teach overload.
- Faculty members possess many years' teaching experience as well as diversity in content expertise and clinical backgrounds.
- Faculty reported they receive support from each another, the Program Director, and the Interim Dean of the Nursing & Allied Health Center.
- Faculty members are actively engaged in curriculum planning, implementation, and evaluation.
- Faculty provide remediation and tutoring in the Center for Learning Excellence. This time counts towards required service hours.
- Faculty express satisfaction with having a skills lab/simulation coordinator and a simulation specialist, which allows time for preparation. The Program Director and faculty agreed that resources are adequate to meet instructional needs.
- Faculty has regular meetings with recorded minutes and collaborative decision-making.

Students:

- The program admits two (2) cohorts of students per year to the traditional and LVN to ADN tracks and one (1) cohort per year to the paramedic to ADN track. The number

admitted varies based on the number of qualified applicants and available faculty. The Dual Credit High School track admitted one cohort of fifteen (15) students in January 2016.

- At the time of the survey visit, four hundred thirty-five (435) students were in the program. In August 2016, seventy (70) were admitted to the traditional track and five (5) were admitted to the paramedic to ADN track. Thirty-six (36) were admitted to the LVN to ADN track. Ten (10) students continued in the Dual Credit High School program.
- Students shared that the program of study is preparing them for clinical practice and said the clinical learning experiences are very rewarding.
- Student policies are well-defined, written, and available to students.
- Students are provided a two (2) day Boot Camp orientation at the beginning of the program.
- Student representatives have input as members of the governance committee. Student evaluations of faculty and courses are utilized in the development of policies.
- ADN graduates are able to obtain employment in the local hospitals, home care agencies and long term care facilities.

Clinical Learning Experiences:

- The program has active clinical contracts with a number of affiliating agencies that provide varied clinical opportunities to complement the curriculum.
- Faculty clinical coordinators have the responsibility for procuring and maintaining clinical agreements and sites. Criteria for selecting clinical agencies are well-defined.
- Skills lab and simulation activities are utilized. The simulation lab has mid- and high-fidelity mannequins, along with low- fidelity task trainers.
- The labs are adequately stocked. While the current equipment may not be sufficient, a simulation hospital is currently under construction as part of the Dr. Ramiro R. Casso Nursing and Allied Health Campus Expansion. The four-story, 90,000 square foot facility is slated to be complete in February 2018, and will include new labs, the hospital simulation center, and a new library, adding to the clinical learning experiences.
- Clinical learning experiences are faculty supervised; Board faculty-to-student ratios are maintained.
- Preceptors are used in the program.
- Clinical learning experiences correlate with didactic content.
- Formative and summative evaluations are utilized. Faculty were encouraged to establish and utilize inter-rater reliability policies to ensure consistency of grading clinical performance.

Facilities, Resources, and Services:

- A full array of student services is offered, including a library with computer resources, financial aid services, testing accommodation sites, and counseling.
- There is adequate, open parking available adjacent to the program building.
- The facilities housing the ADN program are conducive to learning, spacious, equipped with numerous classrooms, and skills and simulation labs.
- Media equipment is available in every classroom.
- The Program Director and full-time faculty have furnished, private offices.
- The program has full-time student advisor, counseling, and secretarial support.
- The program chair and faculty report resources meet teaching needs.

- The facilities include restrooms, faculty and student lounges, lockers, and break areas.

Records and Reports:

- Faculty files provide evidence of faculty qualifications, responsibilities, and faculty evaluations.
- The program has a Total Program Evaluation (TPE) Plan that is used for decision making.
- Student files contain all documents required by Rule 215.
- Clinical affiliation agreements are up to date.
- Storage of files meets the requirement of Rule 215.

Findings Related to Total Program Evaluation:

- The program has a Total Evaluation Plan that is used for decision making.
- The philosophy, mission statements, and program objectives were last evaluated and/or reviewed in 2010.

Draft Letter

January 19, 2017

Christie M. Candelaria, Ed D, RN, CCRN-K
Program Director, Associate Degree Nursing Education Program
South Texas College
1101 East Vermont Avenue
McAllen, Texas 78503

Dear Dr. Candelaria,

At the January 19-20, 2017 meeting, the members of the Texas Board of Nursing considered the report of the survey visit to the South Texas College Associate Degree Nursing Education Program in McAllen, Texas. Board members wish to extend appreciation for your dedication to nursing education in Texas. It was the decision of the Board to accept the report of the survey visit and issue the following recommendations:

Recommendation #1:

The College administration is encouraged to issue the Program Director an annual contract extending for the full year. College administration shall submit a written response to this recommendation no later than April 15, 2017.

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) 463-4631.

Sincerely,

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

Copy: Shirley A. Reed, M.B.A., Ed.D., President, South Texas College
Jayson T. Valerio, DNP, RN, Interim Dean, Nursing & Allied Health Center
Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board