

**PROPOSAL TO ESTABLISH A NEW NURSING EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM
RIO GRANDE VALLEY CAREERS AN INSTITUTE FOR HIGHER LEARNING IN PHARR, TEXAS
VOCATIONAL NURSING EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM**

SUMMARY OF REQUEST:

Consider Rio Grande Valley Careers An Institute for Higher Learning's (RGV Careers) proposal to establish a new Vocational Nursing (VN) Educational Program and the report of a survey visit (See Attachment #1). The final revised proposal was sent to members of the Texas Board of Nursing (BON or Board) under separate cover. A notice of public hearing has been posted (See Attachment #2).

HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE:

- RGV Careers is a privately owned school established in September 2005 to meet the state's dynamic workforce needs.
- The school offers classes in the following programs: Certified Nursing Assistant, Patient Care Technician/Medical Assistant, Phlebotomy Technician, Electrocardiogram Technician, Medical Office Specialist/Medical Billing, Physical Therapy Technician Aide, and Personal Training.
- RGV Careers was approved in May 2006 by the Texas Workforce Commission Career Schools & Colleges and the Veterans' Education Department to provide the aforementioned training. The school was also approved by the Texas Department of Aging & Disability Services Regulatory Services Division & the Nurse Aid Training & Competency Evaluation Programs in February 2006.
- Site visits were conducted on March 20, 2009 and June 11, 2009 by Virginia Ayars.

SUMMARY OF PROPOSAL:

Overview of the Proposal:

- The first draft of a proposal to establish a vocational nursing educational program at RGV Careers was received in the board office on February 26, 2008.
- The proposal has undergone several revisions subsequent to recommendations by Board staff.
- The program is proposing to begin in August 2009 after Board approval with an enrollment of thirty students in the first cohort.
- The program of study is designed to be completed in twelve months by full-time students, attending classes from 8 am to 5 pm, Monday through Friday.

Rationale and Need for the Program:

- Surveys of health care institutions, agencies, and clinics in the Rio Grande Valley communities indicate a growing need in multiple settings for licensed vocational nurses.
- The proposal includes evidence of numerous current and projected job openings for Licensed Vocational Nurses (LVNs) in the Rio Grande Valley.
- The program has been developed in response to increasing community needs for vocational nurses in the Rio Grande Valley.
- The proposed program has community support from other nursing educational programs and health care institutions in the area.
- The proposal includes letters of support from community leaders and politicians, including the mayors of Alamo, McAllen, and Pharr, Texas.

Availability of Clinical Sites:

- Clinical facilities, including the following four hospitals: South Texas Health System, Edinburg Regional Medical Center, Rio Grande Regional Center, and Mission Hospital, have indicated their ability to provide clinical learning experiences for students enrolled in this program.
- A sample signed clinical agreement is included in the proposal.

Director/Faculty:

- There is an identified director, Olga Jimenez, RN, who meets the requirements to serve as program director.
- During the development of the proposed program, Ms. Jimenez worked in collaboration with Annabelle Rodriguez, Administrator/Owner, and Diane Frazor, EdD, RN, in order to ensure that the

program would be based upon sound educational principles and would meet Texas BON requirements as set forth in Board rules.

- One qualified full time faculty and one adjunct are named to begin the program.
- Additional prospective applicants have expressed an interest in faculty positions.
- The program director and faculty will be hired after program approval.

Financial Support and Resources:

- Administrator/Owner Annabelle Rodriguez has provided a letter of approval and support in which she commits the resources of the school, including financial budgeting adequate for the development and success of this program.
- The budget projections address the required elements of Rule 214.

Applicant Pool:

- The potential student population consists of new students and current or former students of Rio Grande Careers.
- Other sources of potential students are qualified applicants for other nursing educational programs in the Rio Grande Valley area who were not admitted to those programs related to facility constraints.
- In order to have a continuing supply of students, an active recruitment program will be conducted in the designated health science technology high schools in the area.
- In addition, the program will attract students from a wide variety of ongoing recruitment efforts.

Faculty and Student Handbooks:

- A faculty handbook and a student handbook for the new program have been developed and reviewed by board staff.

Program of Study:

- The proposed curriculum is well-developed and includes all required elements.
- The proposed program curriculum includes 574 hours for classroom instruction, and 870 hours for clinical practice (lab and clinical).
- All students will have the opportunity to participate in the Assessment Technology Institute (ATI) Entrance Test, Assessment Test, and Virtual ATI.
- The clinical evaluation tools submitted with the proposal demonstrate leveling and progression.
- Required clinical experiences have been planned to meet clinical objectives.

Facilities, Resources and Services:

- There is a full-time administrative assistants who will meet the secretarial needs for the program.
- The physical resources were initially surveyed during the site visit of March 20, 2009. Additions to the nursing skills laboratory were recommended by Board staff, completed, and assessed as appropriate during the June 11, 2009 site visit.

Student Support Services:

- Adequate student support services are available for students on the campus.

Records and Reports:

- Adequate provision for records and reports has been included.

Total Evaluation Plan:

- The Total Evaluation Plan, including numerical benchmarks for evaluating the required areas, will be completed by all faculty members. The Total Evaluation Plan and the benchmarks will be revised as the tool is used.

SUMMARY OF SITE VISIT:

- General Campus Information
 - RGV Careers is an attractive site providing a variety of health related programs of study for the community.
 - There is ample parking on campus, as well as areas for student gatherings and study groups.
 - RGV Careers is a growing career school with potential for community partnerships.

Classrooms:

- Dedicated classrooms for the health division programs are spacious, well-lighted, and nicely furnished with tables and chairs to allow comfort for students.

- Technology is available in the classroom and IT help is available to faculty and students.

Skills Laboratory:

- A fully equipped skills laboratory is available for the program. Rotations of lab hours will prevent scheduling conflicts.
- Lab equipment and supplies are appropriate.

Computer Laboratory:

- The computer laboratory is located in the building and is available to students on a walk-in basis.
- A testing center is available in the building.

Faculty Offices and Resources:

- The administrator has a spacious and attractive private office.
- The director has a spacious and attractive private office.
- Other faculty members will share an appropriately furnished office.
- There is additional space for 3 other instructional offices.
- Instructional resources are readily available.
- A conference room is available in the building for meetings and counseling sessions.

Learning Resources Area:

- Audiovisual materials are available and accessible to students in the nursing storage area.
- The library provides computer access to journals and additional study helps and models that may be checked out by students.
- The staff provide an orientation for students and are available on an individual basis.

PROS AND CONS:

Pros:

- RGV Careers has been diligent in its efforts to formulate a satisfactory proposal to establish a new vocational nursing educational program addressing all requirements and receive approval from the Board. The school has responded in a timely manner to all suggestions by Board staff for improvements to the proposal document.
- The administrator, nursing director, and proposed faculty are dedicated to the success of the program.
- RGV Careers is licensed by the Texas Workforce Commission (TWC).
- The administrator is very supportive of the new program and has extensive experience in education.
- The proposed program of study/curriculum is well-developed and addresses all required elements.
- The number of health care facilities in the community will provide excellent clinical learning experiences for the students. The administrator has actively sought community resources for prospective vocational nursing students and developed strong collaborative relationships with local healthcare facilities.
- Adequate budget projections to operate the program and acquire the necessary facilities, resources and services were included.

Cons:

- The director and faculty do not have teaching experience in a nursing educational program.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Move to grant initial approval for RGV Careers An Institute for Higher Learning in Pharr, Texas to establish a new vocational nursing educational program based upon the proposal and findings from the survey visits and issue the commendations and recommendation, as indicated in the attached letter (Attachment #3).

TEXAS BOARD OF NURSING
SURVEY VISIT PROGRAM REPORT
(Vocational Nursing Educational Programs)

NAME OF NURSING PROGRAM: RGV Careers An Institute for Higher Learning

DEAN OR DIRECTOR: Proposed Director: Olga Jimenez, BSN, RN

DATE APPOINTED

REASON FOR SURVEY: New Program Survey

DATE: June 11, 2009

SURVEY VISITOR(S): Virginia Ayars, MS, RN

In this report the nursing program met standards and criteria unless otherwise indicated by narrative. Narrative in the Evidence column documents findings of pertinent data, outstanding performance, or deficiencies. Narrative in the Comments column includes recommendations or requirements to be met based on analysis of the survey visit

STANDARD/CRITERIA	EVIDENCE	COMMENTS
§214.11 Facilities, Resources, and Services		
(a) The controlling agency/governing institution shall be responsible for providing: (1) educational facilities, (2) resources, and (3) services which support the effective development and implementation of the nursing education program.	Survey visit validated that the physical facilities will support the VN program and provide a good learning environment for students.	Criterion met.
(b) An appropriately equipped skills laboratory shall be provided to accommodate maximum number of students allowed for the program (1) The laboratory shall be equipped with hot and cold running water.	The skills lab is furnished with five hospital beds, mannequins, and appropriate equipment. Sinks are available with hot and cold running water. Ample storage for lab equipment is in place.	Criterion met.
(c) The director/coordinator and faculty shall have adequate secretarial and clerical assistance to meet the needs of the program.	The administrative staff in place provides adequate secretarial assistance for the VN program. Consideration will be given to adding staff as needed.	Criterion met.

<p>(d) The physical facilities shall be adequate to meet the needs of the program in relation to the size of the faculty and the student body.</p> <p>(1) The director/coordinator shall have a private office.</p> <p>(2) Faculty offices shall be conveniently located and adequate in number and size to provide faculty with privacy for conferences with students and uninterrupted work.</p> <p>(3) Space for clerical staff, records, files, and equipment shall be adequate.</p> <p>(4) There shall be mechanisms which provide for the security of sensitive materials, such as examinations and health records.</p> <p>(5) Classrooms, laboratories, and conference rooms shall be conducive to learning and adequate in number, size, and type for the number of students and the educational purposes for which the rooms are used.</p> <p>(6) Teaching aids shall be provided to meet the objectives/outcomes of the program.</p> <p>(7) Adequate restrooms and lounges shall be provided convenient to the classroom.</p>	<p>The director will share a large, attractively furnished office with faculty. Additional faculty will share an office which is furnished for three people. If private counseling is required, a conference room is available.</p> <p>Clerical staff occupy a space central to the program directors' offices.</p> <p>Presently locked cabinets are available in the director's office.</p> <p>Classrooms are spacious, furnished with tables and chairs, and equipment for powerpoint and audiovisual learning is available.</p> <p>A skills lab with five hospital beds is furnished and stocked for the program.</p> <p>There are adequate student and faculty lounges and restrooms. There are designated spaces where students can study together.</p>	<p>Criterion met.</p>
<p>(e) The learning resources, library, and departmental holdings shall be current, use contemporary technology appropriate for the level of the curriculum, and be sufficient for the size of the student body and the needs of the faculty.</p> <p>(1) Provisions shall be made for accessibility, availability, and timely delivery of information resources.</p> <p>(2) Facilities and policies shall promote effective use, i.e. environment, accessibility, and hours of operation.</p>	<p>The library provides computer access to online journals and many study helps.</p>	<p>Criterion met.</p>

§215.12 Records and Reports		
<p>(a) Accurate and current records shall be maintained for a minimum of two (2) years in a confidential manner and be accessible to appropriate parties, including Board representatives. These records shall include, but are not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (1) records of current students; (2) faculty records; (3) administrative records, which include minutes of faculty meetings for the past three years, and school catalogs; (4) the current program of study and curriculum including mission and goals (philosophy and outcomes), and course outlines; (5) agreements with affiliating agencies; and (6) the master plan of evaluation with most recent data collection. 	<p>Secure record storage is available.</p>	<p>Criterion met.</p>
<p>(b) Record forms may be developed by an individual school.</p>		
<p>(c) Hospital employment forms are not to be used for student records.</p>		
<p>(d) Records shall be safely stored to prevent loss, destruction, or unauthorized use.</p>		
<p>(e) Copies of the program's Texas Board of Nursing Educational Program Information Survey (NEPIS), Compliance Audit of the Nursing Educational Program (CANEP), and important Board communication shall be maintained as appropriate.</p>		

BOARD OF NURSING FOR THE STATE OF TEXAS
333 Guadalupe Street, Suite 3-460
Austin, Texas 78701-3942

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

for

Consideration of a Proposal from RGV Careers An Institute for Higher Learning

To Establish A

Vocational Nursing Educational Program

in

Pharr, Texas

Date and Time: July 23, 2009 at 11:00 a.m.

Place:

The Driskill Hotel
604 Brazos Street
Austin, Texas 78701

The Board will hear testimony from individuals who wish to present information concerning the proposal. Written testimony will also be considered and should be received in the Board's office by July 10, 2009.

Address written testimony to:

Katherine Thomas, MN, RN, Executive Director
Texas Board of Nursing
333 Guadalupe Street, Suite 3-460
Austin, Texas 78701-3942

DRAFT LETTER

July 23, 2009

Olga Jimenez, RN, Director
Vocational Nursing Educational Program
RGV Careers
1200 W. Polk Ave., Suite P & Q
Pharr, Texas 78577

Dear Ms. Jimenez:

At the July 23-24, 2009 meeting, members of the Texas Board of Nursing (BON or Board) discussed the Rio Grande Valley Careers An Institute for Higher Learning (RGV Careers) Proposal to Establish a New Vocational Nursing Educational Program in Pharr, Texas, and the report of the June 11, 2009 survey visit. The members of the Board wish to thank you, Ms. Annabelle Rodriguez, and Dr. Diane Frazor for being present to answer questions.

As indicated by the enclosed order, the Board takes pleasure in informing you that based upon the discussion and review of documents, it was the Board's decision to grant Initial Approval status to RGV Careers and allow admission of students beginning in August 2009, and issue the following commendation and recommendation:

Commendation:

1. RGV Careers is commended for its support and efforts to provide a vocational nursing educational program for the area.
2. The school is commended for its efforts to obtain excellent clinical learning experiences for students in the vocational nursing educational program.

Recommendation:

It is recommended that the director and faculty become involved with the Texas Association of Vocational Nurse Educators and consider this activity as part of the faculty development plan in vocational nursing educational instruction.

A recommendation is a suggestion based upon program assessment indirectly related to the rules to which the program must respond but in a method of their choosing. The program director should provide a written explanation of the program's response to this recommendation by December 1, 2009.

We wish you success with the program. If you have questions, or if we may be of assistance, please contact board staff at (512) 305-7660.

Sincerely,

Linda R. Rounds, PhD, RN, FNP
President

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

copy: Ms. Annabelle Rodriguez, Administrator

enclosure

**Texas Board of Nursing
333 Guadalupe Street, Suite 3-460
Austin, Texas 78701-3942**

BEFORE THE BOARD OF NURSING
IN AND FOR THE STATE OF TEXAS

In the matter of the proposal of RGV Careers An Institute of Higher Learning

For approval to implement a Vocational Nursing Educational Program

ORDER OF THE BOARD

TO: RGV Careers An Institute of Higher Learning

The Board of Nursing in and for the State of Texas in a regularly scheduled meeting, held on the 23rd day of July 2009, considered the proposal for authority to implement a Vocational Nursing Educational Program and obtain Approval from the Board, pursuant to Section 301.157, Texas Occupations Code.

At the meeting, Linda R. Rounds, PhD, RN, FNP, President of the Board, presided and the following members were present:

Deborah Hughes Bell, CLU, ChFC, Consumer Member
Kristin K. Benton, RN, MSN, Representing LVN Education
Patricia "Patti" Clapp, BA, Consumer Member
Tamara Cowen, MN, RN, Representing RN Practice
Sheri Denise Crosby, JD, SPHR, Consumer Member
Marilyn J. Davis, RN, BSN, MPA, Representing RN Practice
Blanca Rosa Garcia, PhD, RN, Representing ADN Programs
Richard Robert Gibbs, LVN, Representing LVN Practice
Rachel Gomez, LVN, Representing LVN Practice
Kathy Leader-Horn, LVN, Representing LVN Practice
Josefina Lujan, PhD, RN, Representing BSN Education
Beverly Jean Nutall, LVN, Representing LVN Practice
Mary Jane Salgado, MEd, Consumer Member

The Board reviewed the proposal of the above school and after having discussed the proposal in an open public meeting, the Board makes the following findings:

FINDINGS

1. That a written proposal has been filed with said Board.
2. That a public meeting on said proposal was held to take testimony and evidence by the Board.
3. That the written proposal does meet the minimum requirements for proceeding with the development of an approved vocational nursing educational program offering.

ORDER

NOW THEREFORE, IT IS ORDERED THAT, the proposal of RGV Careers An Institute of Higher Learning is approved, having been found to comply with minimum requirements for establishing a Vocational Nursing Educational Program to prepare vocational nurses.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED THAT THE aforementioned school is authorized to proceed to implement a vocational nursing educational program and prior to admission of students all requirements of Chapter 214 Vocational Nursing Education shall be met.

DATED THIS 23rd day of July, 2009.

THE BOARD OF NURSING IN AND
FOR THE STATE OF TEXAS

Seal

By: _____

Linda R. Rounds, PhD, RN, FNP

President