

**Proposed Change of Program Approval Status Based on Review of NCLEX-PN® Examination
 Pass Rate, Compliance with Rule 214, and Survey Visit**

**Ranger College in Comanche, Texas
 Vocational Nursing Educational Program**

Summary of Request:

Consider staff recommendation concerning the approval status, recommendations, and requirements to be met for Ranger College in Comanche, Texas, Vocational Nursing (VN) Educational Program based on review of the NCLEX-PN® examination pass rates for 2009, compliance with Rule 214, and the June 21-22, 2010 Survey Visit Report.

Historical Perspective:

Program	Year	Approval Status	NCLEX-PN® Pass Rate	Number of First Time Candidates (Passed/Total)
Ranger College VN Program (Merged)	2009	Full with Warning	83.78%	31/37
	2008	Full	77.78%	35/45
	2007	Full	78.57%	44/56

Ranger College at Comanche VN Program	2006	Full	84.21%	16/19
	2005	Full	100%	10/10
	2004	Full	100%	9/9

Ranger College at Early VN Program	2006	Full	81.08%	30/37
	2005	Full	91.89%	34/37
	2004	Full	87%	38/44

- Ranger College has operated a vocational nursing (VN) educational program since 1975 when Cisco Junior College transferred administrative control of the Graham Branch of the their vocational nursing educational program to Ranger College.
- Records show that Ranger College successfully operated two separate programs, located in Comanche and Early, Texas, approximately thirty miles apart, for two years prior to deciding to consolidate the two programs into one program. This consolidation became effective on October 1, 2007 with the main campus of the program designated as the campus located in Comanche, Texas.
- Due to the 79.59% pass rate on the 2007 NCLEX-PN® examination, the program was required to submit a self-study report which evaluated factors that contributed to graduates' performance as well as a description of corrective measures to be implemented. The Self-Study Report was received in the Board office on June 17, 2008.

Despite the implementation of corrective measures identified in the self-study, the program's 2008 NCLEX-PN® pass rate was 77.78%, and at the July 2009 Board meeting the program's approval status was changed from full to full with warning.

- The 2009 NCLEX-PN® pass rate was 83.78% with thirty one (31) of thirty seven (37) first time candidates passing the examination.

The program has made significant changes to the admission process and teaching strategies, as well as added new retention strategies.

- New administrators at Ranger College are very supportive of the director and are committed to the success of the Ranger VN program as evidenced by the fact that the extension campus in Early was moved to a new spacious and well equipped building in January 2010.
- Ms. Davis has been the director since 2008 and articulated that the positive changes implemented have now had time to impact the NCLEX pass rate.
- The VN program previously experienced high faculty turnover rates, and now has a very stable and cohesive faculty.
- Board staff made a board-authorized survey visit on June 21-22, 2010. A complete summary of the survey visit is attached (Attachment #1).

Pros:

The June 21-22, 2010 survey visit revealed the following significant positive findings (See Attachment One):

- The new administration has provided enthusiastic support of the vocational nursing educational program.
- The new extension campus in Early has spacious, comfortable classrooms and faculty offices, and a well equipped science lab and nursing skills lab.
- The VN program director is very proactive in seeking out professional development opportunities and resources for herself and the VN faculty.
- The director and faculty are dedicated to ensure the success of the students.
- Faculty are readily available to tutor any student requesting assistance, and at the direction of the VN director, the faculty have created a Facebook page so that students can communicate with faculty and receive prompt answers to questions outside of class days and times.
- Students are provided a wide range of clinical opportunities in the local community.
- Clinical affiliates are very supportive of the nursing program as evidenced by the presence of representatives from clinical sites during the survey visit.
- Students articulated appreciation for the ongoing diligence of the program director and faculty to implement changes to the program of study to ensure learner success.
- Students expressed gratitude for the opportunity to attend a vocational nursing educational program in their local community as well as the employment opportunities available to new graduates in local hospitals and other health care settings.
- The school has identified the need to further revise admission policies so that more highly qualified applicants will be accepted as well as improve retention of students in the nursing program. Beginning Fall 2010, the entrance test will be the HESI, and the Director will interview all candidates meeting the admission requirements before making final selection of students.

Cons:

- The June 21-22, 2010 survey visit revealed the following areas of concern (See Attachment #1).
- The clinical evaluation tools do not demonstrate progression (214.5(c)).
- The faculty handbook and faculty policies need to be further developed (214.7).
- Although students stated that they had input into the program, there are no formal processes or policies to that effect (214.8(l)).
- The attrition has historically been high and the attrition rate for 2009 is 50%.

Staff Recommendation:

Move to change the approval status of Ranger College in Comanche, Texas Vocational Nursing Educational Program from Full with Warning to Full approval, based on the 2009 NCLEX-PN® Examination Pass Rates, compliance with Rule 214, and report of the survey visit conducted by BON staff, accept the report of the survey visit, and issue the commendations, recommendations, and requirements to be met based on staff recommendation, as indicated in the attached letter (See Attachment Two).

Name of Nursing Program: Ranger College in Comanche Texas Vocational Nursing Educational Program

Nursing Program Director: Patty Davis, RN

Reason for Survey Visit: Focused visit related to approval status of full with warning.

Dates of Survey Visit: June 21-22, 2010

Survey Visitors): Virginia D. Ayars, MS, RN, Board Staff
Robin Caldwell, PhD, RN, Board Staff

Texas Board of Nursing (BON) Approval Status: Full with warning

Name of Accrediting/Licensing Agencies: Southern Association of Colleges (SACs).

Summary of Survey Visit:

Activities During Survey Visit:

- Met with the School Administrators/Program Director;
- Interviewed VN faculty and students currently enrolled in the VN program;
- Met with representatives from the clinical sites;
- Reviewed records and documents (student and faculty files, minutes of faculty meetings, and other program documents);
- Toured skills lab, classrooms, nursing offices and other related parts of the campuses at Comanche and Early;
- Conducted a summary conference with the School Administrator/VN Program Director and VN faculty.

Pertinent Survey Visit Findings:

Positive findings revealed during the survey visit include:

1. The School Administrators, VN Program Director, and VN faculty are dedicated to the success of the program and the success of the students.
2. The students are provided a wide variety of direct patient care clinical learning experiences, including acute care, long term care, and short term rehabilitation, subsequent to the VN Program Director's diligent efforts to establish and maintain successful clinical affiliations. Representatives from the clinical sites met with Board staff and expressed strong support for the VN program.
3. During interviews, students verbalized positive comments regarding all aspects of the program.

Administration and Organization

The program director has the authority to administer all aspects of the program, and new college administrators are very supportive of the VN program.

Faculty

Faculty files provide evidence that policies related to faculty qualifications, faculty development, and faculty evaluation are followed. Faculty meeting minutes were reviewed and documentation regarding faculty actions, as well as rationale for decision-making, was evident. However, written faculty policies concerning orientation of new faculty, professional development and job descriptions need to be further developed.

The faculty organization, consisting of the VN Program Director, three (3) full-time faculty and four (4) part-time faculty, routinely meet every month. Of the total seven (7) faculty, three (3) are associate degree RNs, one (1) is a diploma prepared RN, and four (4) are LVNs. The LVN faculty are functioning appropriately.

Faculty expressed excitement about teaching the students and helping them change their lives through higher education.

Faculty stated that college administration supports professional development activities and provides funds for workshops and continuing education. Faculty stated the need for increased salaries, citing the fact that most faculty must work a second job in order to sustain a living wage. Faculty also expressed a desire for tuition reimbursement for those who want to pursue an advanced degree in nursing.

Students

The NCLEX-PN® examination pass rate for the year 2009 was 83.78% with thirty -one (31) out of thirty -seven (37) students taking and passing the examination. The director credits the improvement to an interplay of factors including: changes in admission criteria; new retention strategies; faculty stability; as well as the implementation of other corrective measures identified from the 2008 self study.

Eighty (80) students are accepted each year in the Fall. There are currently forty (40) students enrolled. The attrition rate for 2009 stands at 50%. The VN director attributes the high attrition rate to inadequate admission criteria, personal problems among students as well as a lack of preparedness for the rigors of nursing school. The director has plans to further revise the admission criteria to include the use of a standardized entrance exam. Board staff recommended that the director also conduct one-on-one interviews with applicants prior to final selection of students into the VN program for the Fall. The director was enthusiastic about the recommendation and stated that she will incorporate interviews into the admission process.

Signed receipts of students' receiving policies and eligibility information are in the students files. Students are required to sign any policy changes that occur and documentation is maintained in student files.

Program of Study

The VN curriculum is sound and logically organized. Test questions are taken from a standing test pool and are structured in a manner to familiarize students with the format of NCLEX-PN® test questions. Remedial education has been added and is provided on a weekly basis. However, only one clinical evaluation tool is currently being used across the curriculum which does not allow for evaluation of progression of student performance throughout the curriculum.

Clinical Learning Experiences

Students unanimously reported positive learning experiences under faculty supervision in all clinical agencies. There is a vast variety of clinical learning experiences provided in the vocational nursing program of study.

The VN program has established strong relationship with clinical agencies. Two representatives from Brownwood Hospital met with Board staff during the survey visit, and expressed their support for the VN program.

Facilities, Resources, and Services

Staff visited Comanche and Early campuses, and found that both facilities offer ample space for faculty offices, classrooms, and parking. The new Early campus has a large, well equipped nursing skills lab. The nursing lab at the Comanche campus is located at the Comanche hospital.

Records and Reports

Student and faculty files contained all documents required by Rule 214.

Total Program Evaluation Plan

The Total Program Evaluation Plan is adequate and numerical benchmarks are provided in all categories.

DRAFT LETTER

July 26, 2010

Patty Davis, RN
Vocational Nursing Department Director
Ranger College
Heartland Mall
300 early Blvd, Suite 105
early, TX 76802

Dear Ms Davis:

At the July 22-23, 2010 meeting, members of the Texas Board of Nursing (BON) considered the approval status of Ranger College Vocational Nursing Educational Program in Comanche, Texas, based on the 2009 NCLEX-PN® examination pass rates, compliance with Rule 214, and the report of the June 21-22, 2010 survey visit conducted by Board staff Robin Caldwell, PhD, RN and Virginia D. Ayars, MS, RN.

Based upon the review, it was the decision of the Texas BON to move the Ranger College Vocational Educational program approval status from Full with Warning to Full Approval, accept the survey visit report, and issue the following commendations, recommendations and requirements..

COMMENDATIONS:

1. The administration is commended for the value placed on the vocational nursing program at Ranger College.
2. The director is commended for securing and maintaining clinical affiliations which have resulted in a wide variety of clinical learning opportunities for the vocational nursing students.
3. The director is commended for her proactive efforts to seek out professional development opportunities for herself and the VN faculty.
4. The director and faculty are commended for their dedication to students' success.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. The administration is encouraged to increase VN director and faculty salaries, and provide tuition assistance for those faculty desiring to obtain an advanced degree.
2. The director is strongly encouraged to implement strategies to address the high attrition rate, including interviews with applicants prior to admission into the nursing program.

REQUIREMENTS:

1. Rule 214.5(c) related to *Philosophy/Mission and Outcomes* requires that "Clinical objectives/outcomes shall be stated in behavioral terms and shall serve as a mechanism for evaluating student progression." The program only uses one clinical evaluation across the curriculum which does not allow for evaluating progression of student performance. **Therefore**, the faculty shall revise the clinical evaluation tool to indicate expectations of student progression across clinical experiences and provide copies of the new tools to board staff by October 1, 2010.
2. Rule 214.7(a) related to *Faculty* requires that "There shall be written personnel policies for nursing faculty that are in keeping with accepted educational standards and are consistent with the policies of the controlling agency/governing institution." 2147(a)(6) requires that "Written policies for nursing faculty shall include: plans for faculty orientation to the institution, faculty development, and evaluation of faculty." **Therefore**, the nursing program director shall develop and implement written policies pertaining to faculty orientation and professional development and shall submit copies of the new policies to board staff by October 1, 2010.

3. Rule 214.8(l) states in pertinent part that “ Students shall have mechanisms for input into the development of academic policies and procedures, curriculum planning, and evaluation of teaching effectiveness.” **Therefore,** the director and faculty shall develop and implement formal written policies to ensure that students have input into policies, procedures, and curriculum planning, and shall submit copies of the new policies to board staff by October 1, 2010.

Recommendations are suggestions based upon program assessment indirectly related to the rule. The program must respond, but in a method of the program’s choice. Requirements are mandatory criterion based on program assessment directly related to the rule that shall be addressed in the manner prescribed. If you have any questions, or if we may be of any assistance, please contact Board staff by e-mail at robin.caldwell@bon.state.tx.us or 512.463.4631.

Sincerely,

Linda R. Rounds, PhD, RN, FNP
Board President

Robin Caldwell PhD, RN, CLNC
Nursing Consultant for Education