

**Consideration of Change of Approval Status from Full with Warning to Conditional
 Midland College in Midland, Texas
 Vocational Nursing Education Program**

Summary of Request:

Consider staff recommendation for a change in program approval status for Midland College Vocational Nursing (VN) Education Program in Midland, Texas, based on review of the NCLEX-PN® examination pass rate, review of the 2011 Nursing Education Program Information Survey (NEPIS) , 2011 Compliance Audit for Nursing Education Programs (CANEP), compliance with Rule 214, and survey visit report.

HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE:

Year	BON Approval Status	NCLEX-PN® Pass Rate	Number of First Time Candidates (Passed/Total)
2011	Pending	74.19%	46/62
2010	Full with Warning April 2011	73.68%	42/57
2009	Full	71.74%	33/46
2008	Full	84.78%	39/46
2007	Full	82.14%	46/56
2006	Full	82.61%	38/46

NEPIS Data on Enrollment and Graduation Records for Two Years:

Year	Total Enrollment	New Admissions	Graduates
2011	102	57 (3 cohorts)	63
2010	76	76 (3 cohorts)	47

- Midland College in Midland, Texas began operating a VN Program in 1972.
- The program was required to complete a Self-Study Report in 2010 because of the 2009 NCLEX-PN examination pass rate falling below the required 80%. The Self-Study Report was received in the Board office on May 28, 2010, and evaluated factors which contributed to graduates' performance and included a description of corrective measures to be implemented.
- In the Self-Study Report, the program suggested that the "primary issue (causative factor) had been an inconsistent use of standardized examination outcome data in both the Medical-Surgical examination and in the comprehensive exit examination."
- The Self-Study Report analysis also indicated that the program's use of admission points in their admission process had been a contributing factor and that course and final exam questions were not written at the application or analysis level.
- The program planned the following corrective measures to begin in 2010:
 - revision of admission criteria
 - high standards for standardized examination benchmarks
 - faculty workshops in test development and item writing

- revision of examinations to include application level questions
- utilization of item analysis
- reconsideration of an acceptable score on standardized examinations
- There have been two changes in directors in the last two years. Dr. Becky Hammack is currently serving as Director for the VN program at the main campus. She is also the Dean of the Allied Health Programs, a position she has held for ten years.
- A survey visit to Midland College VN program was conducted on March 21, 2012 by Janice I. Hooper, PhD, RN, and Virginia Ayars, EdD, MS, RN.
- During the survey visit, Board Staff met with college administration and representatives of the VN program to discuss the approval status and possible strategies for success of the program.

Report of the Survey Visit Conducted on March 21, 2012

Board Staff met with:

- College Administration:
 - Steve Thomas, PhD, President of Midland College
 - Richard Jolly, EdD, Executive Vice-President
 - Rex Peebles, PhD, Vice-President of Instruction
 - Deana Savage, EdD, Associate Vice-President of Career and Technical Instruction
- Program Director, Becky Hammack, EdD, RN, Dean, Health Sciences Division
- Coordinator, Carla Hooker, RN
- A group of about forty (40) students
- Six (6) of seven (7) VN nursing faculty

Board Staff toured the campus and the Simulation Center.

Background

- Midland College provides educational opportunities as well as community activities for the citizens of Midland and surrounding areas.
- Midland College has a current enrollment of over six thousand (6,000) students.
- The nursing department includes an associate degree nursing (ADN) program, and VN programs on the main campus and at an extension site in Fort Stockton.
- Midland College receives funding through state monies, grants, and community donors.
- Recent campus renovations have been funded by bonds.

Administration

- College administration expressed strong support for the VN program and its faculty.
- Dr. Hammack discussed several factors that may have impacted the pass rates and that pose challenges for the program:
 - the increasing number of International students in the program for whom English is the second language (Nigeria, Kenya, Korea) (About 35% of the students are Hispanic; 20% are Nigerian; 20% are Kenyan.)
 - students with eligibility issues that delay taking the NCLEX examination

Students

- Students who will potentially take the NCLEX examination in 2012 include a cohort that graduated in December 2011, and graduates who will complete the program in May and August, 2012. There is a possible total of sixty-five (65) students who may test in 2012.
- The VN program usually admits three cohorts of twenty (20) students per year.
- A group of about forty (40) students were interviewed by Board Staff.
- The students spoke positively about the clinical learning experiences, clinical instruction, and the face-to-face classes.
- Students commented on transmission difficulties between the Midland and Fort Stockton campuses when two classes are taught by distance learning using interactive television (ITV). Providing these two courses by distance technology effectively utilizes faculty with specific expertise, such as

maternity nursing. The director and faculty are aware of the difficulties and are trying to improve the situation.

- Responses from students indicated they are eager to learn, aware of scope of practice issues, interested in a wide variety of clinical learning experiences, and are engaged in their education.
- They had positive suggestions for enhancing the program including:
 - ensuring greater consistency in grading criteria used by faculty and in presentation of didactic content by faculty
 - beginning simulation activities earlier in the curriculum
 - scheduling clinical activities so that all students experience the variety of settings
 - evaluating the required text for consistency of information
 - providing an overview of professional behavior and scope of practice in the first course
 - exploring how technology can be improved in the distance learning format (ITV)
 - considering requiring pharmacology as a prerequisite and adding a second advanced pharmacology course to the program
 - requiring that entering students are certified as nurses aides

Faculty

- Six (6) of the seven (7) VN faculty were interviewed. All are fully qualified and committed to the success of the students.
- The faculty meet monthly to conduct the business of the program.
- Faculty are willing to tutor students having difficulty in the program.
- Three of the faculty have been hired within the last academic year. They are being mentored by Dr. Hammack. Board Staff reviewed the new faculty orientation plan.
- The other faculty have been at Midland College for periods from one year to eight years.
- Board Staff engaged the faculty in a discussion about teaching issues and strategies which might impact the success of the students. These ideas were discussed with the director and coordinator.

Program of Study

- The VN programs at the Midland and Fort Stockton campuses use the same curriculum and clinical learning objectives.
- Two courses are taught through interactive television where a faculty member at one site delivers the didactic to both campuses. In this way, faculty with specific expertise are used efficiently in the program.
- The curriculum is designed to be delivered over a twelve (12) month period (3 academic semesters), with one online course (medical terminology). Other courses include web-based materials.
- The curriculum plan complies with Board rules and follows a logically-organized sequence.
- Clinical evaluation tools reflect course objectives and indicate progression across the program.
- Faculty are in the process of implementing the *Differentiated Essential Competencies (2010)* into the curriculum.
- The program has utilized various standardized testing and remediation packages to improve students' ability to think critically in their clinical decision-making.

Facilities, Resources, and Services

- A large simulation center on campus has recently been completed that will provide a clinical learning center for nursing students and other health care programs on campus, for medical students, for physicians, and for hospital use.
- It will provide possibilities for numerous high-fidelity simulation activities, many involving interdisciplinary groups.
- Midland College provides all student services to the nursing programs.
- Faculty have private offices, conference rooms, and spaces adequate for them to carry out their teaching activities.

Rule 214.4(c)(3)(B)(i) states that "A program may be placed on conditional approval status if within one examination year from the date of the warning, the performance of first-time candidates on the NCLEX-PN examination fails to be at least 80%." The program was placed on full with warning approval status at the April 2011 Board meeting.

Rule 214.4(a)(5) states that "Conditional approval is issued by the Board for a specified time to provide the program the opportunity to correct deficiencies. The program shall not admit students while on conditional status. The Board may establish specific criteria to be met in order for the program's conditional approval status to be removed."

Pros and Cons:

Pros:

- The VN program at Midland College is supported by the college administration and by the community.
- The faculty are committed to the program and to helping the students succeed.
- The director and faculty recognize the importance of high standards for their program.
- Students are self-directed and engaged in the learning process.

Cons:

- The program is challenged with a more diverse student mix and seeking strategies to provide adequate education for students with different learning needs.
- Several of the faculty are newly hired and are in orientation.

Background for Recommendation:

Rule 215.4(a)(4) sets forth the parameters of conditional approval status as follows:

(4) Conditional approval is issued by the Board for a specified time to provide the program the opportunity to correct deficiencies.

(A) The program shall not admit students while on conditional status.

(B) The Board may establish specific criteria to be met in order for the program's conditional approval status to be removed.

Therefore, the purposes of conditional approval status are to allow faculty additional time to correct deficiencies which include improving the performance of graduates on the licensing examination and to protect additional students from the risk of receiving educational preparation that does not meet Board standards.

Staff Recommendation:

Staff recommend the following as indicated in the attached letter (Attachment #1):

1. Change the approval status of the Midland College Vocational Education Program in Midland, Texas, from full with warning to conditional. The program may not admit students while on conditional status. The program will remain on conditional approval status until the program demonstrates a pass rate for first time test takers of at least 80% on the 2012 NCLEX-PN® examination. The NCLEX-PN examination year for vocational nursing programs begins on January 1, 2012 and ends on December 31, 2012. In addition, the program shall demonstrate full compliance with Rule 214 prior to a change in approval status.
2. Issue the following recommendations based upon findings during the survey visit:
Recommendation #1: The program is encouraged to explore possible improvements to the distance learning transmission to facilitate greater student satisfaction with this mode of delivery.
Recommendation #2: The faculty are encouraged to develop a greater consistency in grading practices and delivery of didactic content.

Draft Letter

April 23, 2012

Becky Hammack, MSN, RN, Interim Director
Vocational Nursing Education Program
Midland College
3600 Garfield
Midland, Texas 79705-6397

Dear Hammack :

At the April 19-20, 2012 meeting, the members of the Texas Board of Nursing discussed the approval status of the Midland College Vocational Education Program in Midland, Texas, based upon the NCLEX-PN® examination pass rate for 2011, review of the 2011 Nursing Education Information Survey (NEPIS), Compliance Audit for Nursing Education Programs (CANEP), compliance with Rule 214, and the report of the survey visit. Members of the Board wish to thank you and,,, for being present at the meeting to answer questions.

Based upon the discussion and review of documents, it was the decision of the Board to change the approval status of the Midland College Vocational Education Program in Midland, Texas, from full with warning to conditional approval status. The program may not admit students while on conditional status and shall remain on conditional status until the program demonstrates a pass rate for first-time candidates of at least 80% on the 2012 NCLEX-PN® examination. In addition, the program shall also demonstrate compliance with Rule 214 prior to a change in approval status. The 2012 examination year for vocational nursing programs begins January 1, 2012, and ends December 31, 2012. In addition, the program shall demonstrate full compliance with Rule 214 prior to a change in approval status.

The Board also issues the following recommendations to the program:

Recommendation No. 1

The program is encouraged to explore possible improvements to the distance learning transmission to facilitate greater student satisfaction with this mode of delivery.

Recommendation No. 2

The faculty are encouraged to develop a greater consistency in grading practices and delivery of didactic content. Possible activities for faculty are to develop interrater reliability policies and to engage in faculty discussions about consistent teaching strategies.

Board Staff is available to assist with either of these suggestions.

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. Please provide responses to each of the recommendations by August 1, 2012.

If you have any questions or if we may be of assistance, please contact board staff at (512) 305-6814.

Sincerely,

Kristin K. Benton, MSN, RN
President

Janice I. Hooper, PhD, RN
Nursing Consultant for Education

copy: Midland College President
Texas Workforce Commission