

**Consideration of Change of Approval Status from Full to Full with Warning
 Howard College in Big Spring, Texas
 Associate Degree Nursing Education Program**

Summary of Request:

Consider a proposed change in the program approval status of Howard College Associate Degree Nursing (ADN) Education Program in Big Spring, Texas, based upon review of the 2011 NCLEX-RN® examination pass rate, the 2010 Nursing Education Program Information Survey (NEPIS), and Board Rule 215.

Historical Perspective:

- The Howard College ADN Program began in January 1976.
- The program has remained on Full Approval for at least the past ten years.
- The NCLEX-RN® examination pass rates for the past six years:

Exam Year	NCLEX-RN® Pass Rate	Number of First Time Candidates (Passed/Total)	BON Approval Status
2011	73.91%	17/23	Full
2010	75.00%	12/16	Full
2009	93.33%	14/15	Full
2008	92.31%	12/13	Full
2007	87.50%	7/8	Full
2006	100%	11/11	Full

- Howard College is accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools.
- The professional nursing education program is nationally accredited by the National League for Nursing Accrediting Commission.
- Luci Gabehart, MSN, RN, was approved by the Board in October 2008 to assume the position of program director.
- In 2011, the program was directed to complete a Self-Study Report subsequent to the 2010 NCLEX-RN® pass rate of 75%, with 12 of the 16 first-time test-takers successfully completing the licensure examination. The document was received in the Board office on March 10, 2011.
- The Self-Study Report evaluated factors that could have contributed to the graduates' performance and included a description of corrective measures to be implemented.
- A review of the Self-Study Report revealed that a variety of issues may have had an impact on graduates' performance, including:
 - (1) personal problems affecting students prior to taking the licensure examination;
 - (2) availability of remediation strategies for students identified as at-risk or educationally disadvantaged; and
 - (3) significance of student scores on the Assessment Technologies Institute (ATI) standardized comprehensive examinations.
- The Self-Study Report identified the following weaknesses:
 - (1) admission criteria;
 - (2) lack of a pharmacology course;
 - (3) lack of faculty experience;
 - (4) length of time following graduation that students waited before taking the

- NCLEX-RN®; and
 - (5) lack of mandatory NCLEX-RN® style questions utilized in the program of study.
- Specific corrective actions included:
 - (1) change in the NCLEX-RN® review course, from Kaplan to Nursing Education Consultants, Inc.;
 - (2) timely student remediation;
 - (3) addition of *Pharmacology Made Easy* learning modules;
 - (4) NCLEX-RN® content mapping;
 - (5) review of all test questions to evaluate cognitive levels;
 - (6) the establishment of microbiology as a prerequisite course; and
 - (7) completion of the Certified Nurse Aide program prior to admission into the generic ADN program.
- Since submission of the Self-Study Report, the following actions have also taken place:
 - (1) three faculty members attended the five-day Nurse Educator Boot Camp in Albuquerque, New Mexico in July 2011;
 - (2) the passing grade for all nursing courses was increased from 76 to 78;
 - (3) the ATI end-of-course comprehensive examination is weighted at a higher value, 10%, for all nursing courses;
 - (4) the SATIN Grant, beginning in Summer 2011, offers one-on-one tutoring using the Missildine Exam Diagnostic Tool following each test;
 - (5) all test questions are evaluated for cognitive levels, with the following required composition:
 - (A) 1st Semester (Fundamentals/Health Assessment) = 50% of questions above the application level or higher;
 - (B) 2nd Semester (Transition/Medical Surgical I) = 75% of questions above the application level or higher;
 - (C) 3rd Semester (Mental Health, Obstetrics, and Pediatrics) = 90% of questions above the application level or higher; and
 - (D) 4th Semester (Medical Surgical II) = 100% of questions at the application level or higher.
 - (6) students are required to complete the Nursing Jurisprudence Examination prior to graduation; and
 - (7) students are required to complete the NCLEX-RN® Review Course during the semester immediately prior to graduation.
- Although the program incorporated the identified changes, the 2011 NCLEX-RN® examination pass rate was 73.91%, with 17 of 23 first-time test-takers passing the licensure examination.

Pros and Cons:

Pros:

- The program submitted a comprehensive evaluation of factors that may have contributed to the lowered NCLEX-RN® pass rates.
- Corrective measures were timely instituted and evaluated.
- The administration and faculty conducted an extensive review and evaluation of the curriculum and testing processes.

Cons:

- It is not possible to determine if the corrective measures that were implemented to improve student performance are fully effective due to the limited time period from the dates of implementation of the corrective measures to the end of the 2011 NCLEX-RN® examination pass rate year.

Staff Recommendation:

Move to change the approval status of Howard College in Big Spring, Texas Associate Degree Nursing Education Program from Full to Full with Warning and authorize Board staff to conduct a survey visit as indicated in the attached letter (Attachment #1).

DRAFT LETTER

January 23, 2012

Luci Gabehart, MSN, RN, Director
Associate Degree Nursing Education Program
Howard College
1001 Birdwell Lane
Big Spring, Texas 79720

Dear Ms. Gabehart:

At the January 19-20, 2012 meeting, the members of the Texas Board of Nursing discussed the approval status of the Howard College Associate Degree Nursing Education Program based upon the NCLEX-RN® examination pass rate for 2011, review of the 2010 Nursing Education Program Information Survey (NEPIS), and compliance with Board Rule 215. Members of the Board wish to thank you, Dr. Cheryl Sparks, and Dr. Javier Flores 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 Howard College Associate Degree Nursing Education Program from Full to Full with Warning and authorize a survey visit in 2012. Board staff will contact you to schedule the survey visit.

If you have any questions or if we may be of assistance, please contact Board staff at (512)305-7660.

Sincerely,

Kristin K. Benton, MSN, RN
President

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

copy: Southern Association of Colleges and Schools
National League for Nursing Accrediting Commission
Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board