

**Proposal to Establish A New Nursing Education Program  
Cisco College in Abilene, Texas  
Associate Degree Nursing Education Program**

**Summary of Request:**

Consider the Cisco College proposal to establish a new associate degree nursing (ADN) education program in Abilene, Texas, that provides a mobility program for licensed vocational nurses (LVNs) to complete an associate's degree in nursing and to be eligible to apply to take the NCLEX-RN® to become licensed as registered nurses. The final proposal was made available online to members of the Board. A notice of public hearing has been posted (See Attachment #1).

**Historical Perspective:**

- Cisco College was established in 1939 in Cisco, Texas, as a junior college, originally as a part of the Cisco Independent School District. Cisco College began enrolling students in 1940. The success of the college resulted in its separation from the public schools and the election of a Board of Regents in 1956.
- Cisco College has a second location forty miles west of Cisco in Abilene. A new space identified as the Abilene Educational Center opened in 2004 and offers a full range of transfer and technical programs to more than 3000 students.
- The Department of Nursing at Cisco College was established in 1972. Currently the department offers a one-year vocational nursing (VN) program, leading to a certificate in vocational nursing and preparing the graduate to apply to take the NCLEX-PN® examination.
- In 2012 thirty-nine (39) VN graduates took the NCLEX-PN® examination and thirty-seven (37) passed with a pass rate of 94.87%.
- Cisco College previously had an LVN to ADN program that was not successful. Cisco College and Texas Tech University have established a partnership in the development of the proposed program that is designed as a seamless pathway for students to advance to a baccalaureate degree program in nursing (BSN).
- The partnership provides leadership from Texas Tech University as well as access to opportunities for faculty development and to high-fidelity simulation laboratories for students.

**Overview of the Proposal:**

- Cisco College is proposing a new LVN to ADN program at the Abilene Educational Center in Abilene, Texas.
- The proposed ADN program is designed to be completed in twelve (12) months (three semesters) and is based on the concept-based curriculum developed by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board Innovative Grant Project. Cisco College will be the first program in the state to use the second year of the concept-based curriculum. The faculty at Cisco College are developing the courses based upon the approved two year concept-based curriculum.
- Cisco College is seeking Board approval for an August 2013 enrollment date with thirty-five (35) students.
- The program is designed for face-to-face delivery and faculty supervised hands-on clinical learning experiences.
- The program of study has been developed in collaboration with faculty from Texas Tech University in Abilene. The program will prepare graduates for readiness to enter a BSN program. Texas Tech will have a pre-established articulation plan available for students who complete the Cisco College curriculum.

**Purpose and Need for the Program:**

- The proposal cites references indicating the growing need for nurses in Texas.
- Other rationale for the new program indicate that health care agencies in the area project additional nursing vacancies in the future, especially considering that the area is losing two LVN to ADN programs, one having been closed and one planning to close.

**Administration and Organization:**

- The Southern Association for Colleges and Schools (SACS) and The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) have both received notification from Cisco College about the proposed program. The Board of Regents has approved development of the proposed program at their March 19, 2012 meeting. THECB is presently processing the application.
- The VN program at Cisco College has been in operation since 1972.
- The proposed director is Pearl Merritt, RN, EdD, MS, MSN, FAAN, who will serve as approved director of the ADN program assisted by a coordinator, Donella Tucker. Dr. Merritt's credentials and experience fulfill requirements in Rule 214.
- The VN program will also be under her direction with a coordinator managing the day-to-day operation of the VN program.
- Dr. Merritt has taken the lead in the development of the proposal with help from consultant, Patricia Allen, EdD, RN, CNE, ANEF, FAAN, Professor at Texas Tech University, and from faculty.
- Dr. Merritt will also continue to serve as Regional Dean of the Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center in Abilene.
- The administration at Cisco College has committed financial support for the proposed LVN to ADN program.

**Faculty:**

- Two (2) qualified full time faculty have been named and both are involved in the formal concept-based curriculum development in the state.
- A retention counselor will also be employed part time to assure student success.
- The close association with Texas Tech University will be an asset in future recruitment of faculty.
- The faculty salaries at Cisco College will be competitive.
- The faculty handbook was reviewed and includes all required policies.

**Students:**

- Over ninety (90) students have expressed interest in the proposed program.
- Student recruitment and admission will be handled through the Cisco College student affairs office.
- The program is requesting to enroll thirty-five (35) students annually until the program is fully approved.
- An admission rubric will be used in the selection process.
- The student handbook was reviewed and contains all required aspects.

**Program of Study:**

- The proposed curriculum builds on the VN program at Cisco College, moving the student from a block curriculum in the VN program to a newly designed concept-based curriculum in the LVN to ADN program.
- A two (2)-week orientation and competency evaluation unit will introduce the LVN to professional nursing practice and concept-based education. (See schedule included in the proposal.)
- The curriculum contains sixty (60) semester credit hours with thirty-six (36) of them in nursing courses.
- The clinical hours requirement in line with clinical hours in other LVN to ADN programs.
- Table 18 in the proposal lists the concepts used in the program and maps them to nursing courses.
- The proposal presents a descriptions of concept-based approaches to nursing education.
- The program plans to use standardized examinations to evaluate the success of students and to benchmark to national norms.
- The program has access to an established simulation center developed through the alliance between Hendrick Health Care Center and the Texas Tech Health Science regional campus in Abilene.
- The Differentiated Essential Competencies (DECs) have been integrated into the nursing curriculum.

**Clinical Learning Experiences:**

- The clinical learning experiences will follow the traditional faculty supervised model in a variety of nursing settings from acute care, rehabilitation units, home health agencies, mother-baby units, mental health settings, pediatric units, and chronic care clinics.
- Students will be prepared for hands-on care during practice in nursing skills labs and high-fidelity simulation experiences.
- Survey data from clinical facilities indicate sufficient clinical placements for the Cisco students are available.

- The program has contractual commitments with six (6) clinical affiliating agencies for varied experiences.
- The proposed director is currently engaged in cooperative planning for shared clinical experiences with other nursing programs in the area.
- Clinical Evaluation Tools have been designed to measure student progression over three (3) levels. The clinical objectives are based upon the program objectives.

**Facilities, Resources and Services:**

- The director indicated that the plan for secretarial and clerical support is adequate.
- The skills lab will be monitored by assigned faculty using the lab as needed.
- There are eight (8) computer labs available for student use with a total of 173 computers.
- One (1) of the computer labs housing the nursing software recently received twenty (20) new computers.
- There are an additional ninety (90) computers available strictly for nursing student use to accomplish secure testing.
- The survey visit on April 3, 2013, conducted by Sandi Emerson, MSN, RN, Nursing Consultant for Education verified that the physical spaces are in readiness for the program to begin. (See Survey Visit Report in Attachment #2.)
- The library holdings including hard copies, audiovisual resources, texts, and reference books, are available to nursing students, as well as a virtual library to provide a wide range of online access to learning resources.
- The library offers services to assist faculty, students, and staff with research activities.
- Students have access to Tex Share library services.
- Cisco College has a wide range of student services to which nursing students have access.

**Records and Reports:**

- Policies for retention of records and security comply with Rule 215.

**Total Program Evaluation Plan:**

- The Total Program Evaluation Plan is designed to evaluate compliance with Board rules.
- Some items are benchmarked to represent program goals for performance.

**Pros and Cons:**

Pros:

- Cisco College in partnership with Texas Tech University in Abilene has had access to leadership and resources to assist in proposal development.
- Faculty developing the concept-based courses are participating in the statewide concept-based curriculum development.
- Clinical contracts are in place and Cisco College has a working relationship with clinical affiliating agencies.
- Students graduating from the proposed program will be eligible to proceed to the BSN program at Texas Tech University as well as other universities accepting the concept-based curriculum.
- The proposed program has the support from Cisco College administration, health care settings in the area, and community leaders.

Cons:

- The concept-based curriculum is an innovative model and there is uncertainty about its effectiveness. (However, two states stated the concept-based curricula in their states have been effective.)

**Staff Recommendation:**

Move to grant initial approval to Cisco College Associate Degree Nursing Education Program in Abilene, Texas, based upon the proposal, with a Fall 2013 enrollment of thirty-five (35) students, and an ongoing annual enrollment of thirty-five (35) students until the program has received full approval as indicated in the attached order. (See Attachment #3.)

Agenda Item: 3.2.11.b.  
Attachment #1  
Board Meeting: April 2013

**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 Cisco College  
To Establish An  
Associate Degree Nursing Education Program  
in Abilene, Texas

Date and Time: April 18, 2013 at 2:20 PM  
Place: Hobby Building  
333 Guadalupe Street  
Tower II, Room 225  
Austin, Texas

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 office by April 4, 2013.

Address written testimony to:  
Katherine Thomas, MN, RN, FAAN, Executive Director  
Texas Board of Nursing  
333 Guadalupe Street, Suite 3-460  
Austin, Texas 78701-3942

**TEXAS BOARD OF NURSING**  
**SITE VISIT REPORT FOR NEW PROGRAM**  
 (Professional Nursing Education Programs)

NAME OF NURSING PROGRAM: Cisco College

DEAN OR DIRECTOR: Pearl Merritt, EdD, MSN, RN, FAAN

DATE APPOINTED: Date of Approval

REASON FOR SURVEY: Site Visit for Proposed Program

DATE(S): April 3, 2013

SURVEY VISITOR(S): Sandi Emerson, MSN, 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
<p><b>§215.11 Facilities, Resources, and Services</b>            (a) The governing entity shall be responsible for providing:            (1) educational facilities,            (2) resources, and            (3) services which support the effective development and implementation of the professional nursing education program.</p>	<p>The governing entity provided fiscal resources for new building facilities which accommodate all health science programs, including the existing vocational nursing education program and the proposed professional nursing education program. Funding for new equipment and learning resource materials was provided by the governing entity and through community gifts and donations. A retention specialist provides students with opportunities and resources requisite to complete program objectives.</p>	<p>Criterion met.</p>
<p>(b) An appropriately equipped skills laboratory shall be provided to accommodate the maximum number of students allowed for the program.            (1) The laboratory shall be equipped with hot and cold running water.            (2) The laboratory shall have adequate storage for equipment and supplies.</p>	<p>Sufficient skills and simulation laboratories to accommodate existing and proposed nursing program students are in place. A newly constructed simulation center is equipped with mid- and high-fidelity mannequins. A separate seven (7) bed skills laboratory is fully equipped with hospital beds, over-bed tables, night stands, head walls, overhead and bedside lighting, and privacy curtains. A lockable storage room is located in both the skills laboratory and simulation center and stores all needed equipment and supplies for instruction. Hot and cold running water is available at all sinks in both the simulation center and the skills laboratory. Both the simulation center and the skills laboratory have dedicated storage space to include wall mounted cabinets and portable storage racks. All spaces and surfaces, including the floors, are clean and clutter-free.</p>	<p>Criterion met.</p>

STANDARD/CRITERIA	EVIDENCE	COMMENTS
<p>(c) The dean/director and faculty shall have adequate secretarial and clerical assistance to meet the needs of the program.</p>	<p>Full-time secretarial assistance is provided for the dean and faculty. The secretarial office is located two doors from the dean office and in close proximity to faculty offices.</p>	<p>Criterion met.</p>
<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 dean/director 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 physical facilities occupy two floors and are adequate to accommodate both existing health science programs in addition to the proposed professional nursing faculty and student body. The dean has a private office which can accommodate conferences with students and/or faculty. Faculty offices are private offices and are equipped with a desk and chair, a lockable file cabinet, a bookcase, computer and printer, a telephone and two guest chairs. Faculty office doors lock. Student and program records and files are maintained in a locked room located within the secretarial office. Student and program documents are stored in fire-retardant, lockable, four-drawer file cabinets. Sufficient file space is available. An array of at least five (5) classrooms is available for nursing classes. Each classroom is equipped with banquet type tables and chairs, one or more ceiling mounted LCD projectors, an instructor podium, and adjustable overhead lighting. Classrooms with windows have adjustable window coverings. Classroom seating capacity varies from thirty (30) seats to sixty (60) plus in the tiered classroom. Each classroom has the capacity to accommodate varied teaching methodologies such as small group work, demonstrations, debates, and other interactive strategies. Instructional/teaching aids are available as needed by faculty. Located close to the classrooms are both men and women private restrooms. Student lounge or study spaces are located throughout the building in close proximity to the nursing classrooms and on both floors of the building. A computer room is available for student use.</p>	<p>Criterion met.</p>

STANDARD/CRITERIA	EVIDENCE	COMMENTS
<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>Learning resources, including library, are sufficient to meet student and program needs. Students have twenty-four (24) hour access to online library resources. Departmental holdings are current and easily retrievable. Program students have access to all learning resource materials, including simulation centers and computer labs, at both the parent campus, Cisco College, and its educational partner, Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center at Abilene, Texas. Program and college administration have a student-centered approach which promotes student accessibility to learning resources and facilities. A clean, inviting atmosphere was present.</p>	<p>Criterion met.</p>

DRAFT LETTER

Pearl Merritt, RN, EdD, MS, MSN, FAAN, Professor  
Director of Associate Degree Nursing Education Program  
Cisco College  
717 E. Industrial Blvd.  
Abilene, Texas 79602

Dear Dr. Merritt:

At the April 18, 2013 meeting, members of the Texas Board of Nursing (BON or Board) discussed the Cisco College Proposal to Establish a New Associate Degree Nursing Education Program in Abilene, Texas. The members of the Board wish to thank you and ----- for being present to answer questions.

As indicated by the enclosed order, it was the Board's decision to grant Initial Approval status to the Cisco College Associate Degree Nursing Education Program in Abilene, Texas, and to allow a Fall 2013 enrollment of thirty-five (35) students with an annual enrollment of no more than thirty-five (35) students until the program's approval status has been changed to full approval, as indicated in the Board Order.

Congratulations and best wishes.

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

Sincerely,

Kathy Shipp, MSN, RN, FNP  
President of the Board

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

copy: Southern Association of Colleges and Schools  
The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board  
President Bobby Smith, Cisco College

## BEFORE THE TEXAS BOARD OF NURSING

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### **In the Matter of:**

Cisco College  
Associate Degree Nursing Education Program  
in Abilene, Texas

### **ORDER OF THE BOARD**

A public meeting of the Texas Board of Nursing, hereinafter referred to as the Board, was held on April 18, 2013, 333 Guadalupe, Tower II, Room 225, Austin, Texas, to consider the approval status of the Cisco College Associate Degree Nursing Education in Abilene, Texas, based upon the review of the Proposal to Establish a New Associate Degree Nursing Education Program and findings from the April 3, 2013, survey visit, pursuant to Section 301.157, Texas Occupations code and 22 Tex. Admin. Code Chapter 215.

Board members in attendance were: Kathy Shipp, MSN, RN, FNP; Nina Almasy, MSN, RN; Deborah Hughes Bell, CLU, ChFC; Patti Clapp, BA; Tamara Cowen, MN, RN; Sheri Denise Crosby, JD, SPHR; Marilyn J. Davis, RN, BSN, MPA; Richard Robert Gibbs, LVN; Josefina Lujan, PhD, RN; Kathy Leader-Horn, LVN; Mary LeBeck, MSN, RN; and Beverly Jean Nutall, LVN.

After review and due consideration of the filed materials, as well as the presentation by representatives from Cisco College in Abilene, Texas, the Board hereby grants INITIAL APPROVAL of the Cisco College Associate Degree Nursing Education Program in Abilene, Texas, and hereby imposes the following conditions/requirements:

The program shall not enroll more than thirty-five (35) students annually until the program's approval status has been changed to full approval.

Entered this 18<sup>th</sup> day of April, 2013

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Kathy Shipp, MSN, RN, FNP  
President of the Board