

**Consideration of Change of Approval Status from Full with Warning to Full  
 San Jacinto College South in Houston, Texas  
 LVN/Paramedic to Associate Degree Nursing Education Program**

**Summary of Request:**

Consider a proposed change in the program approval status of San Jacinto College South LVN/Paramedic to Associate Degree Nursing (ADN) Education Program in Houston, Texas, based upon review of the 2012 NCLEX-RN® examination pass rate, the 2011 Nursing Education Program Information Survey (NEPIS), and report of survey visit (See Attachment #1).

**Historical Perspective:**

- San Jacinto College South ADN Program was established in 1995 and offers an LVN/Paramedic to ADN Mobility Program.
- The college is accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools.
- The San Jacinto College South nursing education program is accredited by the National League for Nursing Accrediting Commission (NLNAC) through 2016.
- The NCLEX-RN® examination pass rates for the past six years in included in the table:

Exam Year	NCLEX-RN® Pass Rate	Number of First Time Candidates (Passed/Total)	BON Approval Status
2012	88.06%	59/67	Pending
2011	69.81%	74/106	Full with Warning Issued at January 2012 meeting
2010	70.15%	47/67	Full
2009	90.74%	49/54	Full
2008	91.43%	32/35	Full
2007	84.62%	55/65	Full

- Karen Alexander, PhD, RN, CNOR, was approved by the Board in July 2011 to assume the position of program director.
- In 2011, the program was required to complete a Self-Study Report subsequent to the 2010 NCLEX-RN® pass rate of 70.15%, with 47 of the 67 first-time test-takers successfully completing the licensure examination. The Self-Study Report was received in the Board office on April 1, 2011.
- The Self-Study Report identified factors that may have contributed to graduate performance including:
  - ▶ readmission policies;
  - ▶ ineffective remediation tools;
  - ▶ grading practices;
  - ▶ failure to fully use the NCLEX-RN test plan in test blueprints; and
  - ▶ need for alignment of the clinical evaluation tool with didactic courses.
- The program has implemented a number of corrective measures in an effort to improve the success of the graduates.
- Board Staff conducted a survey visit on December 6, 2012.
- The 2012 NCLEX-RN® examination pass rate was 88.06%, indicating that the program is eligible for a change in approval status from full with warning to full.

### **Pros and Cons from the Survey Visit:**

#### Pros:

- Numerous changes were made in the ADN Program during the past two years which have impacted the 2012 NCLEX-RN® examination pass rate of 88.06%.
- The program is currently engaged in recruiting two (2) new nursing faculty to fill the two (2) open positions. Qualified faculty were in the stage of interview during the time of the survey visit.
- The program has been able to maintain clinical affiliating agreements with a range of clinical sites that provide experiences to meet the clinical learning objectives.
- The nursing programs will be moving into a spacious, newly-constructed academic building in August 2013 that will provide new learning opportunities for the students and space for growth.
- The Dean of Allied Health and Science and the Chair of the department are supportive in providing assistance to the program for success.
- The collaborative spirit among the health disciplines in the department adds a valuable dimension to the nursing students' education.

#### Cons:

- Several of the four (4) full-time ADN nursing faculty are new and there is currently a search to add two (2) additional faculty. The director and faculty agree that the program lacks a detailed orientation plan for new nursing faculty.
- Because of vacant faculty positions, nursing faculty workload is heavy to address the classroom teaching and clinical supervision, and the work of the nursing program (committee work, conferences, meetings with students, evaluating students in clinical experiences, grading assignments and tests, developing a test pool for the program, etc.).
- Even though students chose the program because of classes and clinicals scheduled during two (2) days each week, students find it is quite accelerated.

### **Rationale for Recommendations:**

The ADN program at San Jacinto College South was found to be in compliance with Rule 215. The program director, administration, and faculty all voiced their interest in quality improvement.

- Though there is a broad policy about providing faculty orientation to new nursing faculty, the director and faculty agree that an organized, detailed plan for orientation to the nursing program would be extremely beneficial for new faculty.
- With the move to the new building and projected growth in admissions, and since faculty find the workload heavy, it is an excellent time to consider the optimal number of nursing faculty for a successful ADN program and to reassess all work activities and workload for nursing faculty.
- Staff also encourage the program to review the prerequisites for appropriate level and to review the scheduling for effectiveness of instruction.

### **Staff Recommendation:**

Move to change the approval status of San Jacinto College South LVN/Paramedic to Associate Degree Nursing Education Program in Houston, Texas from full with warning to full approval and to make the following recommendations: (See draft letter in Attachment #2).

1. The director and faculty are encouraged to proceed to develop a detailed nursing faculty orientation package for new nursing faculty.
2. The administration and director are encouraged to review current workload policies and actual work responsibilities to determine the optimal number of nursing faculty and faculty workload to ensure success of the ADN program in the future.
3. The administration and director are encouraged to review the prerequisites that will allow the students to matriculate into programs for advanced degrees after graduation without duplication of course requirements. In addition, the faculty and director are encouraged to review current scheduling of classes and clinical to determine its effectiveness for quality instruction.

**Summary of Survey Visit**  
**San Jacinto College South**  
**Associate Degree Nursing Education Program**

**Purpose of Survey Visit:** evaluation of program pending recommendation for change in approval status

**Date of Visit:** December 6, 2012

**Board Staff Conducting Visit:** Janice I. Hooper, PhD, RN, FRE, Nursing Consultant for Education

**Board Staff met with:**

- Laurel V. Williamson, PhD, Interim South Campus President, Vice Chancellor for Learning and Student Success
- Brenda J. Jones, PhD, Vice President for Learning
- Barbara Ake, RN, BSN, MS, EdD, Dean of Allied Health and Science
- Alexander Okwonna, PharmD, Department Chair of Natural Sciences and Health Sciences
- Karen E. Alexander, RN, PhD, CNOR, Program Director for LVN/Paramedic to ADN Mobility Program
- Cynthia Fletcher, BSN, RN, Vocational Nursing Program Director
- ADN Students
- ADN Faculty

**Board Staff:**

- reviewed the curriculum materials including all syllabi;
- reviewed the Student and Faculty Handbooks;
- reviewed the clinical evaluation tools;
- reviewed the total program evaluation plan and minutes;
- reviewed student assignments and tests;
- observed one ADN class in session;
- toured a clinical facility used for both VN and ADN programs: Memorial Hermann Southeast Hospital conducted by Heather Wallace, RN, MSN, Manager of Education and Informatics;
- toured San Jacinto College South campus focusing on student services;
- toured the nursing offices, classrooms, skills labs, and simulation lab; and
- conducted exit interview.

**Summary of Findings:**

Philosophy/Mission and Objectives/Outcomes

- The director and faculty have been engaged in integrating the *Differentiated Essential Competencies for Graduates of Texas Nursing Programs* (DECs) into all aspects of the curriculum.
- The total program evaluation includes a plan for faculty to regularly review the program's philosophy and objectives and to revise as needed.

Administration and Organization

- The organizational chart demonstrates lines of communication, responsibility, and authority between the nursing program and administration, and within the nursing program.
- The nursing programs are housed in the Department of Natural Sciences and Health Sciences, and collaboration among the faculty are evident. Interactions between students of different disciplines are included in classroom and laboratory experiences to promote interdisciplinary practice.
- Administration (Dr. Barbara Ake and Dr. Alexander Okwonna) are involved through their support and assistance in promoting success of the nursing programs.
- Board Staff had the opportunity to view the new academic building now under construction that will house the Natural Sciences and Health Sciences. The building will provide additional spaces, larger classes, and larger, more modern labs. Directors and faculty have been included in the planning of the new building and its spaces.

- Karen E. Alexander, RN, PhD, CNOR, was appointed program director for the ADN program in 2011. She previously served as nursing faculty at San Jacinto College South.
- There seems to be a move toward standardization of nursing programs across the San Jacinto College District, which limits the opportunity for individualization of programs and initiation of innovative ideas on the separate campuses.

### Faculty

- There are currently four (4) full time faculty and two (2) part time faculty (one remediation tutor and one lab/skills coordinator) for the ADN program. There are two (2) open positions and currently candidates were being interviewed for these positions.
- Several of the full time faculty are newly employed. Though there is a written policy for orientation of new nursing faculty, a detailed process for the orientation is lacking. Faculty, director, and administration all agreed that an effective orientation for new nursing faculty is needed. New faculty to San Jacinto College South are required to attend a college orientation in regular sessions across the first year of employment. The orientation to the nursing program is different from a college orientation because of the nature of nursing education, the individuality of each nursing program, and the often lack of preparation among nursing faculty in the art of teaching nursing and evaluating students.
- There has been significant faculty turnover in the ADN program during the last year to strengthen the instruction.
- During the interview with students, students mentioned that the program needs more faculty.
- Nursing faculty abide by the faculty workload policy at San Jacinto College South. Because of responsibilities of faculty in nursing education programs, it is difficult to equate workload of nursing faculty with faculty in other disciplines. Nursing faculty in both VN and ADN programs commented about workload issues.
- In anticipation of moving to a new academic building with spaces that can accommodate more students, the VN and ADN programs both plan to increase enrollments. Administration is aware that an increase in students will require additional faculty.
- The Faculty Handbook was reviewed and it was determined that it not only includes required faculty policies, but many teaching helps and policies to ensure that faculty are teaching and grading consistently.

### Students

- Board Staff met with Level I students.
- Paramedic students expressed concern about their perceptions that LVNs are better equipped to begin the program because of their previous nursing education and familiarity with nursing practice. They specifically mentioned that they were not familiar with lab values, nursing process, and many medical terms used by nurses. (Faculty stated that the paramedic students are successful in the program and on the NCLEX examination.)
- The students positively discussed their recent experiences in the clinical area. Students expressed that they value hands-on clinical experiences.
- Students commented that some of the reasons for entering the ADN program at San Jacinto South were based upon recommendations from graduates and upon the good reputation of the program. Many of the students graduated from the VN program at San Jacinto College South and are continuing their education toward the ADN.
- There are currently fifty-eight (58) students in the ADN program. The program usually admits forty (40) students at two admission points during the academic year (Fall, Spring).
- The program involves one (1) day each week for on-campus instruction and one (1) day for clinical practice. Students chose the program for the two (2) day scheduling, but are finding that it is quite accelerated. Students commented that the reading assignments are heavy and some students desire more class time. (Faculty reinforce content in the reading assignments during class time.)
- During the next semester, student representatives will be named to provide participation by students in the departmental governance.
- Board Staff reviewed the Student Handbook and found that all required student policies are included.

### Program of Study

- The curriculum is logically organized with sound educational principles.
- Board Staff reviewed all syllabi and additional course information and assignments that is provided to students online.
- Faculty have received training in test construction and analysis, and are currently developing their own test pool based upon the curriculum and teaching.
- Board Staff attended class time led by Dr. Alexander. Students were presenting their reflections on the class and its requirements to their peers.
- The director and administration are reviewing the prerequisites to ensure that they are at the optimal level to help the students advance into higher education without duplication of requirements.

### Clinical Learning Experiences

- Contracts with clinical affiliating agencies are current. Because of a history of good relationships with clinical agencies, the ADN students have access to a wide range of clinical experiences. For example, students have the opportunity for clinical experience at Texas Children's Hospital.
- Board Staff toured Memorial Hermann Southeast adjacent to the college. Heather Wallace, MSN, RNC, CPN, Education Manager, provided the tour and explanations about the experiences for both VN and ADN students. This hospital welcomes students and assists in their education.
- The implementation of the DECs into the clinical evaluation tools is in process. Efforts will be made to include more detailed evaluation of students' performances in the clinical areas.
- A lab coordinator facilitates lab scheduling, maintenance, and monitoring for both VN and ADN programs. The labs are shared by both programs.
- The new building will include space and equipment for higher levels of simulation for the students.

### Facilities, Resources, and Services

- The current physical facilities are adequate, but the administration and faculty are anticipating moving to a new building with new furnishings and equipment.
- The library on campus provides assistance to students with searches and projects.
- A complete array of student services is available on campus for the nursing students.
- The nursing programs follow the records and retention policies of the college.

### Total Program Evaluation

- The program uses the evaluation format from the National League for Nursing Accrediting Commission. Evidence is provided that decisions are made based upon evaluation data.

**DRAFT LETTER**

January 21, 2013

Karen Alexander, PhD, RN, CNOR, Director  
Associate Degree Nursing Education Program  
San Jacinto College South  
13735 Beamer Road  
Houston, Texas 77089

Dear Dr. Alexander:

At the January 17-18, 2013 meeting, the members of the Texas Board of Nursing discussed the approval status of the San Jacinto College South LVN/Paramedic to Associate Degree Nursing Education Program based upon the NCLEX-RN® examination pass rate for 2012, review of the 2012 Nursing Education Program Information Survey (NEPIS), findings from the December 6, 2012 survey visit, and compliance with Board Rule 215.

Based upon the discussion and review of documents, it was the decision of the Board to change the approval status of the San Jacinto College South LVN/Paramedic to Associate Degree Nursing Education Program from full with warning to full approval, and to issue the following recommendations:

1. The director and faculty are encouraged to proceed to develop a detailed nursing faculty orientation package for new nursing faculty.
2. The administration and director are encouraged to review current workload policies and actual work responsibilities to determine the optimal number of nursing faculty and faculty workload to ensure success of the ADN program in the future.
3. The administration and director are encouraged to review the prerequisites that will allow the students to matriculate into programs for advanced degrees after graduation without duplication of course requirements. In addition, the faculty and director are encouraged to review current scheduling of classes and clinical to determine its effectiveness for quality instruction.

Please provide a written response to these recommendations to Board Staff by July 1, 2013.

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.

Congratulations on this achievement and best wishes for continuing success in the future.

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

Sincerely,

Kathy Shipp, MSN, RN, FNP  
President

Janice I. Hooper, PhD, RN, FRE  
Virginia D. Ayars, EdD, MS, RN  
Nursing Consultants for Education

copy: Southern Association of Colleges and Schools  
National League for Nursing Accrediting Commission  
Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board  
Laurel V. Williamson, PhD, Interim President, San Jacinto College South