

**Report of a Survey Visit
 Concorde Career Institute in Arlington, Texas
 Vocational Nursing Education Program**

Summary of Request

Consider the report of the August 15, 2013 survey visit to the Concorde Career Institute in Arlington, Texas Vocational Nursing (VN) Education Program. The survey visit was conducted by Gayle Varnell, PhD, APRN, CPNP-PC, Contract Program Evaluator (See Attachment #1).

Historical Perspective:

- The Concorde Career Institute (CCI) in Arlington, Texas Vocational Nursing (VN) Education Program has been in operation since 1996.
- The program is nationally accredited by the Accrediting Bureau of Health Education Schools (ABHES) with ABHES accreditation since 1998.
- The program’s NCLEX-PN® examination pass rates have been unstable since 2009.
 - The NCLEX-PN® examination pass rate for 2010 was 78.28% (209/267) and the program was placed on Full with Warning approval status at the April 2011 Board meeting.
 - The NCLEX-PN® examination pass rate for 2011 was 87.17% (197/226) and the program approval status was changed to Full approval at the April 2012 Board meeting.
 - The NCLEX-PN® examination pass rate for 2012 was 76.35% (184/241) and the program was directed to submit a Self-Study Report. The document was received in the Board office on April 25, 2013.
- Since 2009, four (4) changes in the position of Director of the Vocational Nursing (VN) Education Program have occurred and, currently, an interim director is serving.
- Diana Cook, BSN, RN was reappointed as the Interim Director in May 2013, having previously served in the interim role.
- The faculty turnover rate in 2012 was 33%.
- The NCLEX-PN® examination pass rates for the past five (5) years are provided in the following table:

Exam Year	NCLEX-PN® Examination Pass Rate	Number of First-Time Candidates (Passed/Total)	BON Approval Status
2012	76.35%	184/241	Full April 2012 Board Action
2011	87.17%	197/226	Full with Warning April 2011 Board Action
2010	78.28%	209/267	Full
2009	79.55%	210/264	Full
2008	81.67%	196/240	Full

Summary of Survey Findings:

Findings from the survey visit indicated that the program meets the requirements of Board Rule 214.

Pros and Cons from Survey Visit:

Pros:

- CCI is in the process of implementing corrective measures that were identified in the April 2013 Self-Study Report.
- A new Director of Nursing, Lisa Hawthorne, PhD, RN, has been hired and is scheduled to start September 3, 2013.
- Diana Cook, BSN, RN, current Interim Director, will return to the position of Assistant Director of Nursing for the day program.
- A new Assistant Director of Nursing for evenings and weekends, Norman Hill, MSN, RN, was hired in May 2013.
- There are currently twenty (20) full-time, twenty-two (22) part-time, and eleven (11) substitute instructors.
- The interim director and faculty reported that the VN program receives strong support from CCI administration and the lines of communication are good.
- CCI appears to have a cohesive, supportive VN faculty.
- Students interviewed expressed satisfaction with the program and confidence that the coordinator/director and faculty are committed to their success.
- CCI meets a need in the community for a VN education program and receives support from clinical affiliates.
- CCI has adequate contracts with clinical affiliating agencies in order for students to meet all clinical learning objectives in the program.
- All clinical learning experiences occur in faculty supervised, direct-patient care, hands-on, clinical settings. The program utilizes minimal simulation to prepare students for hands-on patient care and for remediation purposes.

Cons:

- CCI has experienced turnover in the director role four (4) times since 2009. Dr. Hawthorne will be the fifth individual to serve as director, with several interim appointments. The April 2013 Self-Study Report identified the issue and described an orientation and mentoring plan for the VN Program Director.
- The faculty turnover rate in 2012 was 33%; twelve (12) new faculty members were hired in 2013. The April 2013 Self-Study Report acknowledged the issue and stated that faculty would be actively involved in individual personal development plans. The Nursing Program Director and Academic Dean would be actively involved in working with faculty members on their personal growth and professional development. Additional, faculty development will be offered via MaxKnowledge, a faculty development and training package provided via Concorde for all employees. Quarterly in-service training sessions are scheduled.
- The curriculum has not been evaluated since 2008. At that time, the program changed the curriculum to the one that is currently in place. The variable length and number of courses in a term make it difficult to have any comprehensive evaluation of student learning over an academic term.
- Changes in grading policies that will lower the passing standard were mandated by the corporate office after the April 2013 Self-Study Report was submitted.
- The program learning outcomes could not be found in any of the documents provided to students.
- A campus wide orientation for students admitted to all CCI programs is provided; however, information specific to the CCI-VN program is offered during class time in Term 1.

Staff Recommendation:

Move to accept the report of findings of the August 15, 2013 survey visit to the Concorde Career Institute in Arlington, Texas Vocational Nursing Education Program, as noted in the attached letter (See Attachment #2).

**Summary of Survey Visit
Concorde Career Institute in Arlington, Texas
Vocational Nursing Education Program**

Purpose of Survey Visit: Focused survey visit

Date of Visit: August 15, 2013

Board Staff Conducting Visit: Gayle Varnell, PhD, APRN, CPNP-PC, Contracted Program Evaluator

Program Evaluator met with:

- Diana Cook, BSN, RN, Interim Director of Vocational Nursing (VN) – Arlington Campus
- Kimberly Ranft, Interim Campus President
- Constance Woulard, MSN, RN, Director of Nursing Education
- Betty Bedner, MSN, PhD(c), RN, Central Regional Director
- Debra Venvertloh, MSN, RN, Director of Nursing – Dallas Campus
- Norman Hill, MSN, RN, Assistant Director of Nursing, Evening/Weekend Program
- Virginia Thompson, BSN, RN, Full-Time Instructor
- Denise Byerly, BSN, RN, Part-Time Instructor
- Marcia Kacho, MSN, RN, Full-Time Instructor
- Selinza Mitchell, LVN, Part-Time Instructor
- Twenty-four (24) Level 1 students
- Twenty-three (23) Level 2 students

Program Evaluator conducted the following activities:

- Held initial conference with the interim program director and administration;
- Met with faculty members;
- Interviewed students;
- Observed classroom teaching;
- Toured Concorde Career Institute (CCI) campus and facilities;
- Reviewed records and documents including: student and faculty files, minutes of faculty meetings, student and faculty handbooks, syllabi, clinical evaluation tools, and the Total Program Evaluation Plan; and
- Conducted exit interview with Interim Director of Nursing, Interim Campus President, Assistant Director of Nursing Evening/Weekend Program, Director of Nursing - Dallas Campus, and Central Regional Director.

Summary of Findings:

Findings Related to Administration:

- Kimberly Ranft, Director of Student Affairs, is currently the Interim Campus President.
- Administration stated that the VN program adds value to CCI and fulfills a need in the community.
- The administration expressed strong support for the VN program.
- The VN program is one (1) of seven (7) programs of study at CCI. Other programs include Dental Assistant, Medical Assistant, Medical Office Administration, Neurodiagnostic Technology, Polysomnographic Technology, and Surgical Technology.
- The organizational chart was reviewed with administration.
- Diana Cook, BSN, RN was reappointed Interim Director of the VN Education Program at CCI in July 2013.
- Norman Hill, MSN, RN was hired May 2013 as Assistant Director of Nursing for evenings/weekends.
- Lisa Hawthorne, PhD, RN has been hired as the Director of Nursing and is scheduled to start September 3, 2013.
- Diana Cook, BSN, RN will return to the position of Assistant Director of Nursing for the day program.
- The Interim Director reported that the majority of graduates remain in the community and are able to find employment in local hospitals and clinical agencies.

Findings Related to Program of Study:

- The VN program has a full-time day program as well as a part-time evening program. The program of study includes: 645 didactic hours; 0 computer lab hours; 168 skills lab hours; 0 simulation lab hours; and 787 direct patient care hours.
- The program is divided into five (5) terms. Terms 1, 3, and 4 include six (6) separate courses; Term 2 includes five (5) separate courses, and Term 5 includes four (4) separate courses. The courses have different start and stop dates making it difficult to have any comprehensive evaluation for a given term.
- The program includes all Board required content.
- Students attend a CCI campus wide orientation, but specific VN program orientation is provided during class time in Term 1. The Program Evaluator suggested that the incoming director and faculty members consider the development of a mandatory VN Program Orientation that addresses specific needs of VN students to assure student success in the program.
- According to the faculty interviewed, the number of skills lab hours has been reduced over the years and some students graduate without having performed many of the skills that entry level VNs should know, such as nasogastric tube placement and suctioning. The Program Evaluator suggested that the incoming director and the faculty members consider increasing skills lab or simulation lab hours to ensure that all students are proficient in essential clinical competencies.
- Students in all CCI programs of study receive a course catalogue that includes information on all programs offered. The VN program does not have a separate student handbook. The VN program outcomes could not be found in the current CCI Catalog.
- The *Differentiated Essential Competencies (DECs) (2010)* are not mentioned in any of the materials provided to new students.
- The teaching model is based mainly upon face-to-face modalities.
- Admission policies have sufficient rigor to ensure that qualified applicants are admitted into the program.
- Standardized testing is used throughout the program for progression, remediation, and graduation purposes.
- The program has implemented required remediation and tutoring as well as an NCLEX-PN® review course.

Findings Related to Faculty:

- In addition to the Interim Director and Assistant Director, there are fifty-three (53) instructors [twenty (20) full-time faculty; twenty-two (22) part-time; and eleven (11) substitute instructors].
- Twelve (12) of the faculty plus the assistant director were hired in 2013.
- Faculty are encouraged, but not mandated, to attend the monthly faculty meetings that are offered from 5:00 to 6:00 pm on a Tuesday and repeated on a Thursday so that both day and evening faculty can attend.
- Faculty members are engaged in curriculum planning, implementation, and evaluation, but the final decisions are made by the corporation.
- Faculty members have been attending workshops to improve their test writing and item analysis skills.
- Board required policies are documented.
- Faculty members communicate frequently and meet regularly. Minutes of faculty meetings are maintained.

Findings Related to Students:

- The VN program offers both a full-time day program and a part-time evening program.
 - The full-time day program admits fifty (50) students four (4) to five (5) times a year.
 - The part-time evening program admits thirty-two (32) students twice a year in the even-numbered years and three (3) times a year in the odd-numbered years.
- Currently, the program has 320 students, with 180 full-time and 140 part-time students. Enrollment data are provided in the following table:

Days	Admitted	Retained	Re-entries		Evenings	Admitted	Retained	Re-entries
Term 1	54	52			Term 1	31	29	
Term 2	32	22	8		Term 2	32	30	
Term 3	45	23	8		Term 3	31	24	6
Term 4	41	17	7		Term 4	30	22	7
Term 5	55	36	7		Term 5	32	20	2

- Students stated that they enrolled in the CCI-VN program because of location and the reputation of the program.
- Student satisfaction scores on program evaluations are 77.36%
- Several students reported they plan to seek further education to become registered nurses.

Findings Related to Clinical Learning Experiences:

- The program has active clinical contracts with affiliating agencies that provide a variety of appropriate clinical experiences for the curriculum.
- All clinical learning experiences occur in faculty-supervised, direct-patient care, hands-on clinical settings.
- Students must have direct faculty supervision when performing any invasive skills in the clinical setting. Since some clinical sites do not afford the same opportunities to practice all skills, some students may graduate without having an opportunity to perform them.
- The clinical evaluation tools are individually based upon the course content and measure progression of student behaviors across the curriculum.
- Formative and summative evaluations are evident.
- Board faculty-to-student ratios are maintained.

Findings Related to Facilities, Resources, and Services:

- The program is located on the Arlington campus and has a satellite campus in Dallas.
- The VN program offers both a full-time day program and a part-time evening program.
 - The full-time day program admits fifty (50) students four (4) to five (5) times a year.
 - The part-time evening program admits thirty-two (32) students twice a year in the even-numbered years and three (3) times a year in the odd-numbered years.
- The building housing the VN program is appropriately equipped and offers a positive learning environment.
- The program will be moving to a larger facility on the other side of Arlington next year.
- The Director/Coordinator has a large private office that is conveniently located to the other VN faculty.
- Full-time faculty members are provided with a faculty workroom equipped with individual desks, computers, telephones, and locking file cabinets. The facilities include restrooms as well as faculty and student lounges and break areas.
- The VN program classrooms and nursing skills laboratory are adequately equipped. The Interim Director stated that resources are adequate and meet the educational objectives.

DRAFT LETTER

October 21, 2013

Diana Cook, BSN, RN, Interim Director
Vocational Nursing Education Program
Concorde Career Institute
600 East Lamar, Suite 200
Arlington, Texas 76011

Dear Ms. Cook:

At the October 17-18, 2013 meeting, the members of the Texas Board of Nursing considered the report of the focused survey visit to the Concorde Career Institute in Arlington, Texas Vocational Nursing Education Program. The program was found to meet the requirements of Board Rule 214; therefore, it was the decision of the Board to accept the report of the survey visit.

If you have any questions or if we may provide assistance, please contact Board Staff at Virginia.ayars@bon.texas.gov or 512-305-7660.

Sincerely,

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

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

copy: Kimberly Ranft, Interim Campus President
Texas Workforce Commission
Accrediting Bureau of Health Education Schools