

**Consideration of Change in Approval Status
from Initial to Initial with Warning
Hallmark College in San Antonio, Texas
Associate Degree Nursing Education Program**

Summary of Request:

Consider the proposed change in approval status for Hallmark College Associate Degree Nursing (ADN) Program in San Antonio, Texas, from Initial Approval to Initial Approval with Warning based upon the 2014 NCLEX-RN® examination pass rate and areas of noncompliance with Rule 215 identified in the 2014 Self-Study Report.

Historical Perspective:

- Hallmark College ADN program has been in operation since 2011.
- Shelia Savell, PhD, RN was appointed as ADN program chair in 2012 and meets all qualifications set forth by Board Rule 215.6, Administration and Organization.
- Hallmark College is accredited by the Accrediting Commission of Career Schools and Colleges (ACCSC). The most recent program evaluation occurred in 2011. The next evaluation is scheduled for 2016.
- The NCLEX-RN® examination pass rates for the past three (3) years are included in the table below:

NCLEX Examination Year	BON Approval Status	NCLEX-RN® Examination Pass Rate	Number of First Time Candidates (Passed/Total)
2014	Initial	61.90%	39/63
2013	Initial	67.65%	23/34
2012	Initial	New Program	N/A

- Due to the 2013 NCLEX-RN® examination pass rate of 61.90%, the program director and faculty were required to submit a Self-Study Report (SSR) in 2014 that identified factors that may have contributed to graduates' performance and a description of corrective measures to be implemented.
- Factors identified by the faculty in the 2014 SSR that may have contributed to the decline in the NCLEX-RN® examination pass rate and led to the program's development and implementation of corrective measures include the following:
 - Faculty recruitment strategies were reviewed and revised.
 - Faculty orientation and development were found to be limited and revised to include additional support.
 - Course load in third semester found to be heavy and reorganization of semester three and four courses resulted in a more equitable course load.
 - Grading and evaluation practices reflected grade inflation and were revised to provide more accurate grading practices.

- Qualified applicant pool strategies reviewed and revised to increase number of qualified applicants, thus additional successful graduates.
- After review of the Self-Study Report received in 2014, a response letter was sent by Board Staff acknowledging the findings in the SSR and plan for corrective measures (See Attachment #1).
- The Board Staff conducted a conference call with the program representatives Dr. Savell, Joe Fisher, and Dr. Kenward on November 24, 2014, to discuss the process for changing the program's approval status from Initial Approval to Initial Approval with Warning at the Board meeting on January 22, 2015. The conference call provided an opportunity for the Board Staff and program representatives to discuss the process and implications of the warning status.
- Hallmark College Associate Degree Nursing Education has provided a response letter to be included with the Board report (See Attachment #2).

Rationale for Recommendations:

Rule 215.4(c)(3)(A) states: "A warning may be issued to a program when the pass rate of first-time NCLEX-RN® candidates Is less than 80% for two (2) consecutive examination years..."

Staff Recommendations:

Move to change the approval status for Hallmark College Associate Degree Nursing Program in San Antonio, Texas, from Initial Approval to Initial Approval with Warning based upon the 2014 NCLEX-RN® examination pass rate, information in the SSR, compliance with Rule 215, and impose the conditions and requirements in the attached Board Order (See Attachment #3).

Draft letter

January 22, 2015

Shelia Savell, PhD, RN
Program Chair
Associate Degree Nursing Education Program
Hallmark College
10401 IH-10 West
San Antonio, Texas 78230-1737

Dear Dr. Savell:

At the January 22-23, 2015 meeting, members of the Texas Board of Nursing (BON) discussed the approval status of Hallmark College Associate Degree Nursing Program in San Antonio, Texas, based the 2014 NCLEX-RN® examination pass rate, information in the SSR, compliance with Rule 215, and impose the conditions and requirements in the attached Board Order (See Attachment #3).

Based upon the discussion and review of information, it was the decision of the Board to change the approval status of the Hallmark College Associate Degree Nursing Education Program in San Antonio, Texas from Initial Approval to Initial Approval with Warning and impose the conditions and requirements in the attached Board Order.

If you have any questions or if we may be of any assistance, please contact Board Staff at jo.queen@bon.texas.gov or 512-350-7658.

Sincerely,

Katherine A. Thomas, MN, RN, FAAN
Executive Director

Copy: Brent Fessler, President
Accrediting Commission of Career Schools and Colleges



Texas Board of Nursing

333 Guadalupe Street, Ste. 3-460, Austin, Texas 78701
 Phone: (512) 305-7400 Fax: (512) 305-7401 www.bon.texas.gov

Katherine A. Thomas, MN, RN, FAAN
Executive Director

June 9, 2014

Shelia Savell, PhD, RN, Chair
 Martha Fessler School of Nursing
 Hallmark College
 10401 IH – 10 West
 San Antonio, TX 78230-1737

Dear Dr. Savell and Nursing Faculty:

The purpose of this letter is to acknowledge receipt of the Martha Fessler School of Nursing at Hallmark College 2014 Self-Study Report. As the Education Consultant for the program, I wish to express my appreciation to the faculty for their diligence and thoughtfulness evident in this comprehensive report. Board staff values the faculty members' participation in the March 7, 2014 conference call to discuss the Self-Study Report. The Education Consultants participated in 30 conference calls with professional nursing education programs and found the time devoted to the calls a beneficial experience that allowed us to connect with the programs at the teaching level.

The Self-Study Report identified many strengths of the program, including:

- Rigorous admission process;
- Rich clinical learning experiences;
- Strong administrative support;
- State-of-the-art facility and resources;
- Accomplished faculty members; and
- Sound curriculum for simulation and skills lab.

Corrective measures to address multiple areas were described in the report, including:

- Curriculum
 - Revised placement of cardiac, pulmonary, and neurologic content into RNSG 1441 (basic problems) and RNSG 2443 (complex problems);
 - Revised organization of courses for semester three, including RNSG 2313 (Mental Health) and OB/Peds) RNSG 2512; and
 - Revised overall curriculum plan and intend to consider a concept based curriculum.
- Examinations
 - Incorporated exams with NCLEX-RN style questions to comprise at least 75% of the final grade in all courses except RNSG 1146 (Legal/Ethical), RNSG 1115 (Health Assessment), and RNSG 2207 (Transitions);

Members of the Board

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- Removed drug dosage/medication administration calculation exams from lecture courses and linked them to clinical courses;
- Developed and implemented policies and procedures to heighten exam security as well as ensure consistency in exam administration;
- Developed multiple versions of unit exams for all nursing courses;
- Added ATI Live NCLEX-RN Review to student ATI package; and
- Revised utilization of ATI remediation and predictor.
- Faculty
 - Defined faculty expectations in both classroom and clinical areas;
 - Implemented standardized lab curriculum that will be supervised by the Simulation/Skills Lab Director;
 - Reviewed faculty salary structure with subsequent increase to faculty pay scale;
 - Incorporated PhD prepared faculty mentoring in the areas of exam blue prints, item writing and analysis, and content delivery;
 - Added Nurse Tim to faculty development resources;
 - Provided funding and release time for off-site faculty development;
 - Increased recruitment efforts in consultation with Human Resources; and
 - Revised/expanded New Faculty Orientation Plan.
- Applicant Pool/Students
 - Increased number of qualified applicants through advertising/community exposure.

The depth of the evaluation of the program and analysis of those areas for improvement is evident in the Self-Study Report. Program faculty and leadership are commended for the thorough review and the measures initiated and in progress to remedy the identified issues. The program strength of caring and competent faculty is reflected in the quality of the Self-Study Report.

No additional information is requested at this time. Please send Board staff an electronic version of the report so that it may be maintained the Hallmark College program file.

If you have questions or concerns, please contact me via e-mail at Virginia.ayars@bon.texas.gov or telephone at 512-305-7660.

Sincerely,



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

Copy: Joe Fisher, President



December 19, 2014

Katherine A. Thomas, MN, RN, FAAN
 Executive Director
 Texas Board of Nursing
 333 Guadalupe Street, Ste. 3-460
 Austin, Texas 78701

Dear Ms. Thomas,

The faculty and Program Chair of Hallmark College appreciate the opportunity to address the Texas Board of Nursing. The recent telephone conference call and email communication with education consultants have been very helpful.

In response to the program's 2013 NCLEX-RN® examination pass rate of 63.16%, a self-study was submitted and corrective measures were taken. Unfortunately, the program's 2014 NCLEX-RN® examination pass rate was only 61.90%, in spite of the corrective measures. The chair has been closely monitoring graduate performance and in March of 2014 the pass rate rose to 81%. However, subsequent cohorts did not continue this trend, likely due to not having the benefit of program changes and enhancements to semesters one and two. All corrective measures outlined in the self-study have been implemented and several are ongoing.

A critical analysis comparing successful graduates to those unable to pass NCLEX® was conducted. The analysis revealed an NCLEX® Predictor score less than 70, earning an F in any RNSG course and/or earning three or more Cs in RNSG courses were associated with failure of the NCLEX-RN® examination. These findings are similar to the results of the 2013 analysis.

Based on this comparison, the following changes have been, or are in the process of being implemented:

- Students who fail a Phase 2/Level 1 or Level 2 course will be dismissed from the program, but may be eligible for re-entry. However, they are required to sit out one term. Level 1 students must compete for a spot in the next class ranking process. Students approved for re-entry to Level 2 will be re-admitted only as space allows.
- The ATI NCLEX Predictor score has increased from 25% to 30% of the grade weight in RNSG 2207: Transition to Nursing Practice.
- Students that make a second C in an RNSG course will be placed on a remediation plan.

The program has experienced more faculty turnover than anticipated and has had difficulty filling the pediatric position and finding the right person to fill the second medical/surgical position. Salaries were adjusted to be more competitive, and Human Resources has made faculty recruitment a priority. In addition, faculty have identified three areas that require targeted interventions; student preparedness for the rigor of the nursing curriculum, the delivery of nursing content, and evaluation of student testing. Action plans will target these three areas.





The Program Chair has expanded the roles of two senior faculty to create a leadership team to ensure faculty support and follow through with specified interventions. The Director of Clinical Education (DCE) leads clinical education, including laboratory, simulation and clinical learning activities. The Director of Instruction and Assessment (DIA) assesses faculty learning needs; and develops, plans, and implements a program of training and education for the nursing faculty. The leadership team is intentionally focusing efforts on semesters one and two, to ensure the students have a strong foundation. The transition from general student to nursing student and from a foundations nursing student to the second semester are particularly challenging to students. These semesters also experienced greater faculty turnover.

Intentional efforts in all four semesters include the following areas:

Student preparation

- Scheduled class time to introduce students to all resources available.
- Content related to study and test taking strategies.
- Content related to “Thinking like a nurse.”
- Implementation an enhanced remediation program.
- Orientation to each semester with focus on use of resources.

Content delivery, including clinical connections

- Completed analysis of NCLEX® Program Reports for 2013-2014
 - Hallmark’s program demonstrated significant improvement in several areas since the 2012-2013 report.
 - Areas of concern include nutrition, integument/musculoskeletal, and nervous/sensory.
 - None of the reported areas of concern can be attributed to any one course or instructor.
 - Complete detailed mapping of all content is in process and will be completed prior to offering courses in Spring 2015.
- The leadership team will hold course and semester workdays to evaluate all courses prior to Spring 2015.
- Faculty development activities;
 - Active learning strategies
 - Exam blueprint development
 - Item writing and analysis
 - Focused clinical experiences
 - Individual teaching by the DIA as need and time permit
- Classroom observations will be conducted on all instructors once per semester.
- Student evaluation and testing. The DIA requires that:
 - Examinations in the major courses be submitted for review by the DIA or a peer, prior to deployment of the exam to students.
 - New faculty review exam results, discriminations, etc. with her following administration of the exams.





In conclusion, Hallmark College has a strong foundation as a new nursing program however, there is much work to be done. The faculty, Program Chair and the administration of Hallmark College are committed to our students and the protection of patients for whom they care. The overall objective is to produce graduates who are ready to pass NCLEX® RN, and provide compassionate, competent, and safe care to patients. This can be accomplished by maintaining high standards and providing the support and resources to those students that have the ability to meet the standards. The nursing team feels that this plan will achieve these objectives.

Thank you for your time and consideration. Please let us know if we can provide additional information.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Shelia Savell'.

Shelia Savell, PhD, RN
Program Chair



BEFORE THE TEXAS BOARD OF NURSING

ORDER OF THE BOARD

In the Matter of
Hallmark College
Associate Degree Nursing Program
San Antonio, Texas

A public meeting of the Texas Board of Nursing, hereinafter referred to as the Board, was held on January 22, 2015, 333 Guadalupe, Tower II, Room 225, Austin, Texas, to consider the approval status of the Hallmark College Associate Degree Nursing Program in San Antonio, Texas, pursuant to Section 301.157, Texas Occupations Code and 22 Tex. Admin. Code Chapter 215, based upon the NCLEX-RN® examination pass rate for 2014, information in the 2014 Self-Study Report, and compliance with Rule 215.

Representatives from Hallmark College in San Antonio, Texas, discussed the change in approval status during a conference call with Board Staff and were offered the opportunity to provide a written response for the Board's consideration. After review and due consideration of the materials presented by Staff and filed by the Board hereby CHANGES the approval status of Hallmark College Associate Degree Nursing Education Program in San Antonio, Texas from INITIAL APPROVAL to INITIAL APPROVAL WITH WARNING and imposes the following conditions/requirements:

1. In accordance with Rule 215.4(a)(3)(A), a program survey visit will be conducted by Board Staff during 2015.
2. An evaluation of the effectiveness of the corrective measures outlined in the 2014 Self-Study Report is to be submitted by the program to Board Staff no later than June 1, 2015, per Education Guideline 3.2.1.a.

Entered this 22nd day of January, 2015

Katherine A. Thomas, MN, RN, FAAN
Executive Director
On Behalf of the Texas Board of Nursing