

**Consideration of Withdrawal of Approval
Texas Southmost College in Brownsville, Texas
Associate Degree Nursing Education Program**

Summary of Request:

Consider the proposed withdrawal of Texas Board of Nursing approval for the Texas Southmost College (TSC) Associate Degree Nursing (ADN) Education Program in Brownsville, Texas, which has been on conditional approval status since January 2016, and Board Staff recommendation based upon the 2016 NCLEX-RN® examination pass rate, findings in the Self-Study Report of 2014, and the report of the March 4, 2015 survey visit.

Historical Perspective:

- The TSC ADN Program began operation in 1975, participating in a partnership agreement with the University of Texas at Brownsville (UTB) as TSC/UTB. However, in March 2011, the TSC District Board of Trustees officially withdrew the college from the partnership agreement.
- The dissolution of the partnership resulted in many changes to the TSC ADN program. One major consequence was a loss of veteran nursing faculty.
- In the Fall of 2013, TSC, as a separate entity, enrolled the first class of ADN students.
- Celia De La Garza, MSN, RN was appointed Interim Director of the ADN program in December 2014 and permanent Program Director in February 2015. Ms. De La Garza has served as an ADN faculty member at TSC since 2009.
- TSC is regionally accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges through 2018. The ADN program is nationally accredited by the Accreditation Commission for Education in Nursing (ACEN) through 2019. In July 2016 ACEN issued TSC a warning.
- The NCLEX-RN® examination pass rates for the past five (5) years are provided in the following table. Many of the 2014 NCLEX-RN® candidates are graduates of the former TSC and UTB partnership program.

Examination Year	BON Approval Status	NCLEX-RN® Examination Pass Rate	Number of First Time Candidates (Passed/Total)
2016	Conditional	73.68%	28/38
2015	Full with Warning	57.14%	40/70
2014	Full	46.36%	51/110
2013	Full	71.30%	77/108
2012	Full	81.02%	111/137

- Due to the 2013 NCLEX-RN® examination pass rate of 71.30%, the Program Director and faculty were required to submit a Self-Study Report (SSR) in 2014 that would evaluate factors that may have contributed to the graduates' performance on the NCLEX-RN® examination and a description of the corrective measures to be implemented. A comprehensive SSR was received in May 2014.
- Although corrective measures were timely implemented, the 2014 NCLEX-RN® pass rate was 46.36% and the approval status of the program was changed from Full Approval to Full Approval with Warning at the January 2015 Board meeting.
- Beverly Skloss, MSN, RN, Board Contracted Program Evaluator, conducted a site visit on March 4, 2015, as mandated in the January 2015 Board Order. All requirements issued in the January 2015 Board Order have been fully addressed.
- Although corrective measures to improve candidate success were initiated, the NCLEX-RN® examination pass rates continued to be below the 80% benchmark. The program was placed on Conditional Approval at the January 2016 Board meeting. Several conditions and requirements were issued. The program has not been allowed to enroll new students since January 2016.
- Currently, six (6) students are enrolled in the program, due to complete the program on May 5, 2017. A Teach-Out Plan was submitted to the Board on November 17, 2016.
- Rule 215.4(c)(3)(C) states: "Approval may be withdrawn if: (i) the performance of first-time NCLEX-RN candidates fails to be at least 80% during the examination year following the date the program is placed on conditional approval . . . "

Meeting Between Board Staff and Texas Southmost College Representatives:

On December 7, 2016, Board Staff met with TSC Interim President Mike Shannon to discuss the status of the ADN Program and possible Board action. The agenda for this meeting is included in Attachment #1.

Rule 215.4(a)(5) states that "The Board may withdraw approval from a program which fails to meet the Board's requirements within the specified time. The program shall be removed from the list of Board-approved professional nursing education programs." Withdrawal of approval from a program would require that the program design a plan to teach-out the currently enrolled students or find placement for them in other nursing programs.

Several facts were made evident at the meeting:

- The dissolution of the long-term UTB/TSC partnership created an unstable learning environment for students enrolled in the TSC ADN Program.
- A strong need in the community exists for TSC to offer an ADN Program.
- TSC is interested in establishing a new ADN Program after twelve (12) months from the date of the order have elapsed.

Pros of Withdrawal of Approval:

- The mission of the Board is to protect and promote the welfare of the people of Texas by ensuring that each person holding a license as a nurse in this state is competent to practice safely.
- The Board fulfills its mission through the regulation of the practice of nursing and the approval of nursing education programs.
- Students and potential students of the program may be at risk for receiving an inadequate educational preparation to practice safely.

Cons of Withdrawal of Approval:

- Withdrawal of approval affects the morale within an institution.

Rationale for Staff Recommendation:

Based upon the history of the program on conditional approval since the 2015 NCLEX-RN® examination pass rate, the identification of areas of noncompliance with Rule 215, and consistent with the process described in Rule 215.4(a)(5), the recommendation is to withdraw approval from the Texas Southmost College Associate Degree Nursing Education Program in Brownsville, Texas, and to remove the name of the program from the list of Board-approved professional nursing education programs following their teach-out.

Rule 215.3(d)(1) provides guidance when Closing a Program and requires that the dean or director of the program must notify the Board of the academic provisions and teach-out plan for students to complete the program; of provisions made for access to and safe storage of vital school records, including transcripts of all graduates; and the methods to be used to maintain requirements and standards until the program closes.

Rule 215.3(d)(2) states that “The program shall continue within standards until all students enrolled in the professional nursing education program at the time of the decision to close have graduated. In the event this is not possible, a plan shall be developed whereby students may transfer to other approved programs.”

Rule 215.4(c)(12) states “A program from which approval has been withdrawn may reapply for approval.” The program may submit a new nursing program proposal no earlier than twelve (12) months from the date of this order.

Staff Recommendation:

Move to withdraw approval of the Texas Southmost College Associate Degree Nursing Education Program in Brownsville, Texas, based upon the 2016 NCLEX-RN® examination pass rate, findings in the Self-Study Report of 2014, and the report of the March 4, 2015 survey visit, and to remove the name of the program from the list of Board approved professional nursing education programs following the teach-out. Further, move to impose the requirements as indicated in the attached order (See Attachment #2).

DRAFT LETTER

January 23, 2017

Mike Shannon, Interim President
Texas Southmost College
80 Fort Brown
Brownsville, TX 78520

Dear Mr. Shannon:

At the January 19-20, 2017 meeting, members of the Texas Board of Nursing (Board) discussed a change of approval status for the Texas Southmost College Associate Degree Nursing Education Program based upon the 2016 NCLEX-RN® examination pass rate, findings in the Self-Study Report of 2014, and the report of the March 4, 2015 survey visit. Members of the Board wish to thank you and XXXXXXXX for being present to answer questions.

Rule 215.4(a)(5) states that “The Board may withdraw approval from a program which fails to meet the Board’s requirements within the specified time. The program shall be removed from the list of Board approved professional nursing education programs.”

Based upon the discussion and review of information, it was the decision of the Board to withdraw approval for the Texas Southmost College Associate Degree Nursing Education Program in Brownsville, Texas, to remove the program from the list of Board approved professional nursing education programs following the teach-out, and to impose the requirements in the Board Order. Since this will constitute a closure of the Associate Degree Nursing Program on the Texas Southmost College campus, Texas Southmost College is required to follow Board standards for closing a program.

It is the responsibility of the program to inform the college administration of this action. If you have questions or if we may offer assistance, please contact Board Staff at virginia.ayars@bon.texas.gov or 512-305-7660.

Sincerely,

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

Copy: Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board
Accreditation Commission for Education in Nursing

BEFORE THE TEXAS BOARD OF NURSING

ORDER OF THE BOARD

In the Matter of
Texas Southmost College
Associate Degree Nursing Education Program
In Brownsville, Texas

A public meeting of the Texas Board of Nursing, hereinafter referred to as the Board, was held on January 19, 2017, 333 Guadalupe, Tower II, Room 225, Austin, Texas, to consider the approval status for the Texas Southmost College Associate Degree Nursing Education Program in Brownsville, Texas, based upon the NCLEX-RN® examination pass rate for 2016, findings in the Self-Study Report of 2013, and the March 4, 2015 Survey Visit Report, pursuant to Section 301.157, Texas Occupations Code and 22 Tex. Admin. Code Chapter 215.

After review and due consideration of the filed materials, as well as the presentation by representatives from Texas Southmost College in Brownsville, Texas, and other interested parties, if any, the Board hereby WITHDRAWS approval for the Texas Southmost College Associate Degree Nursing Education Program in Brownsville, Texas, and hereby imposes the following conditions/requirements:

1. The program shall submit to the Board no later than June 1, 2017, a plan for teach-out arrangements for all enrolled students, or evidence that all students either have completed the program or other academic provisions have been made;
2. The program shall make provisions for access to and safe storage of vital school records, including transcripts of all graduates. Plans for the provisions shall be submitted to the Board no later than June 1, 2017;
3. The program shall develop a plan to ensure methods are used to maintain Board requirements and standards until the program closes, and submit the plan to the Board no later than June 1, 2017; and
4. The program may not reapply for approval of a new proposal for a nursing education program until at least twelve (12) calendar months from the date of this order have elapsed.

Entered this 19th day of January, 2017

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