

**Consideration of Report of Survey Visit to
 Bell Tech Career Institute in Houston, Texas
 Vocational Nursing Education Program**

Summary of Request:

Consider the report of the June 28-29, 2017 survey visit to Bell Tech Career Institute (BTCI) Vocational Nursing (VN) Education Program in Houston, Texas. The survey visit was conducted due to program history and a change in program director on May 25, 2017. It was conducted by Beverly Skloss, MSN, RN, Contract Program Evaluator following consultation with Education Consultant Susan Lee, PhD, RN, CNE.

Historical Perspective:

- The BTCI VN Education Program was approved by the Board of Nursing (Board) at the October 27, 2011 Board meeting.
- BTCI is licensed by the Texas Workforce Commission (TWC).
- Since the program opened, there have been five program directors. Tonye Cox-Miller, DNP, MSN, MBA, RN, served as the Program Director from February 2016 until May 2017.
- The current Program Director is Stacey L. Forte', MSN, RN, who was approved in May 2017.
- The NCLEX-PN® examination pass rates for the past five years are provided in the following table:

NCLEX Examination Year	BON Approval Status	NCLEX-PN® Examination Pass Rate	Number of First Time Candidates (Passed/Total)
2016	Conditional (moved to Full Approval in January 2017)	100%	13/13
2015	Initial with Warning	20.83%	5/24
2014	Initial	58.82%	10/17
2013	Initial	37.93%	11/29
2012	New Program	No candidates	

- The program submitted a Self-Study Report (SSR) in 2014 due to the 2013 NCLEX-PN® examination pass rate of 37.93%. Although the program implemented measures to improve the performance of students on the national licensing examination, the NCLEX-PN® examination pass rate continued to be below 80% in 2014 and 2015.
- Major areas needing corrective actions with accompanying time frames for implementation were identified in the SSR. Some of the corrective measures included: 1) establish a standardized testing policy and process; 2) establish faculty continuing education development using "Nurse Tim" and local resources; 3) establish weekly faculty meetings to include a faculty committee structure; 4) implement a remediation program; 5)

implement standardized assessment testing for admission applicants, update recruitment process, and institute candidate orientation; and 6) implement the Total Program Evaluation plan.

- Corrective measures identified in the SSR included: writing a testing policy; implementing computer testing; establishing a Health Education Systems Incorporated (HESI) and Assessment Technologies Institute (ATI) Test of Essential Academic Skills (TEAS) year-long testing program; establishing lesson plan binders to document teaching plans and course outlines; establishing weekly faculty committee meetings; implementing a remediation program; conducting quarterly faculty evaluations; implementing HESI assessment testing for applicants; updating the recruiting process and instituting a candidate orientation; and upgrading clinical sites.
- The program achieved its first pass rate above 80% in 2016, after three years of not meeting this benchmark. At the January 2017 Board meeting, the Board changed the program's approval status to Full Approval and imposed the following conditions and requirements:
 1. The program shall not enroll more than one cohort of 30 students until the program demonstrates a pass rate for first-time candidates of at least 80% on the 2017 NCLEX-PN® examination. The 2017 NCLEX-PN® year is January 1, 2017 through December 31, 2017; and
 2. The program must demonstrate full compliance with Rule 214.
- When a program is placed on conditional approval, as occurred in 2016, it is restricted from enrolling students. The requirement to limit enrollment was intended to allow the program to demonstrate improvement in outcomes for more than one year before increasing the number of enrolled students.
- The owners/administrators of the program have expressed an interest in future growth in 2018 of the VN program and in the addition of a professional nursing program.
- The survey visit was scheduled to evaluate progress in improvement strategies and readiness for growth.

Summary of Survey Findings (See Attachment #1):

Positive Aspects of Survey Visit:

- The students stated they are supported by the Program Director and faculty, who are caring, knowledgeable, and readily available.
- Administration stated that the VN Education Program is a priority of BCTI.

Concerns of Survey Visit:

- Although the Program Director indicated she has time to fulfill her responsibilities, which include directing the VN Education Program, the Patient Care Technician program, and the Nurse Aide program, Ms. Forte' stated she has no teaching responsibilities due to awaiting approval from TWC. Once approved, per BCTI policy, her teaching load may be as much as eight hours per week.
- Clinical facilities were limited and had low patient census, placing student learning at a disadvantage since the clinical learning experiences do not offer students exposure to client health complexities throughout the lifespan. Course and clinical objectives could not be met by the current single facility for courses, such as Maternal/Child Health or Pediatrics.
- Program Evaluator found disorganization in curriculum because program courses did not include required course outlines.

- The full-time faculty position was filled June 2, 2017. Prior to that time, the only full-time faculty was the Program Director.
- Clinical affiliation agreements for all clinical facilities were not available. One affiliation agreement was current; while the other affiliation agreement was not available for review by Program Evaluator. Other clinical affiliation agreements are not being utilized.
- Three out of six skills lab beds were not operational.
- Although the facility is modern and spacious, Program Evaluator noted that the temperatures in some areas of the building were uncomfortably warm and not conducive to learning.

Rationale for Staff Requirements:

Findings from the survey visit indicated efforts have been and are being implemented to improve student outcomes. Because of the high turnover in program directors, a number of previously issued Board orders have not been met or maintained. Areas that need immediate attention are the identification of additional clinical settings that will allow students broader opportunities to fulfill clinical objectives and the inclusion of outlines in the syllabi for each course. Board Staff has provided rationale for the requirements in the Board Order below:

Staff Rationale for Requirement #1:

Rule 214.9(e) lists the five (5) areas of study, which include, but are not limited to, Nursing Care of Children, Maternity Nursing, Nursing Care of the Aged, Nursing Care of Adults, and Nursing Care of Individuals with Mental Health Problems.

Further, Rule 214.10(b) states, "Faculty shall develop criteria for the selection of affiliating agencies/clinical facilities or clinical practice settings which address safety and the need for students to achieve the program outcomes (goals) and course objectives through the practice of nursing care or observation experiences. Consideration of selection of a clinical site shall include: (1) client census in sufficient numbers to meet the clinical objectives/outcomes of the program/courses."

Therefore, the program shall identify additional clinical sites that will provide opportunities for students to meet clinical learning objectives and provide this information to Board Staff no later than September 1, 2017.

Staff Rationale for Requirement #2:

Rule 214.10(c) states, "(c) Faculty shall select and evaluate affiliating agencies/clinical facilities or clinical practice settings which provide students with opportunities to achieve the goals of the program.

(1) Written agreements between the program and the affiliating agencies shall be in place before clinical learning experiences begin and shall specify the responsibilities of the program to the agency and the responsibilities of the agency to the program."

Therefore, the program shall provide copies of new, signed clinical affiliation agreements with two or more additional facilities to Board Staff no later than September 1, 2017.

Staff Rationale for Requirement #3:

Rule 214.10(d) states, "The faculty member shall be responsible for the supervision of students in clinical learning experiences and scheduling of student time and clinical rotations.

(3) The student's daily client assignment shall be made in accordance with clinical objectives/outcomes and learning needs of the students.”

Therefore, the program shall provide a projected schedule of clinical assignments and clinical sites for the remainder of 2017 to Board Staff no later than September 1, 2017.

Staff Rationale for Requirement #4:

Rule 214.9(g)(3) states, “The curriculum plan, including course outlines, shall be kept current and available to faculty and Board representatives.”

Therefore, the program shall provide syllabi with outlines for each course to Board Staff no later than September 1, 2017.

Staff Recommendation:

Move to accept the report of the June 28-29, 2017 survey visit to Bell Tech Career Institute and issue the requirements in the attached letter and Board Order (see Attachment #2).

**Summary of Survey Visit to
Bell Tech Career Institute in Houston, Texas
Vocational Nursing Education Program**

Purpose of Survey Visit: The survey visit was conducted due to program history and a change in Program Director on May 25, 2017.

Date of Visit: June 28-29, 2017

Board Staff Conducting Survey Visit: Beverly Skloss, MSN, RN, Contract Program Evaluator.

Program Evaluator met with:

- Raffy O. Bell, MBA, CEO
- Kikelomo Bello, BSN, RN, Campus Director
- Stacey Forte', MSN, RN, Program Director
- F. Gary Heath, MSN, RN, Faculty
- 14 Vocational Nursing (VN) students

Program Evaluator:

- Held initial conference with Program Director and administration;
- Reviewed the curriculum and all syllabi;
- Reviewed the Student Handbook, Faculty Handbook and Academic Catalog;
- Reviewed the clinical evaluation tools and available clinical affiliation agreements;
- Reviewed organizational chart and minutes of faculty meetings;
- Reviewed 2016 Nursing Education Program Information Survey (NEPIS) and faculty profile;
- Reviewed faculty and student files;
- Reviewed Total Program Evaluation (TPE) Plan and data;
- Toured program facilities;
- Observed a class in session; and
- Conducted exit interview with administrators and program director.

Summary of Findings:

Administration and Organization:

- The Board-approved Program Director is Stacey Forte', MSN, RN. She has been with BTCI since May 25, 2017. She is responsible for the VN Education Program, Patient Care Technician program, and Nurse Aide program.
- BTCI administrators stated the VN Education Program is a priority and that financial support is available to meet program needs.
- Administration indicated Ms. Forte' communicates with them on a regular basis and is proactive regarding compliance with Board rules.
- Ms. Forte' indicates she has no teaching responsibilities because she is awaiting faculty approval from TWC. Once approved, per BCTI policy, her teaching load may be as much as eight hours per week. Program Evaluator suggested Ms. Forte' negotiate a reasonable teaching load considering her other duties as director of the Nurse Aide, Patient Care Technician, and VN Education Programs.

- At the time of the survey, Ms. Forte' verbalized having adequate time to fulfill the director responsibilities.
- Ms. Forte' indicated she has full authority to direct the program in all aspects.
- Ms. Forte' said BTCI has a list of 30 interested applicants.

Program of Study:

- The curriculum is designed to be completed in four quarters over 48 weeks. There are 1588 clock hours: 704 didactic hours, and 884 lab/clinical hours. This exceeds Rule 214 minimum requirements of hours for VN Education Programs.
- The total program is comprehensive and stresses safe nursing care.
- The curriculum identifies the *Differentiated Essential Competencies (DECs) for Graduates of Texas Nursing Programs* in the documents.
- Program Evaluator noted that course outlines for all courses were not available. In addition, a clinical course syllabus contained a clinical evaluation tool that, per faculty, is not utilized. Program Evaluator suggested these areas be developed.
- Standardized testing is used throughout the program for progression, remediation, and to determine readiness for the NCLEX-PN® licensure examination.
- Ms. Forte' indicated the desire to increase the rigor of program testing by adding another NCLEX-PN® comprehensive predictor exam midway through the program.
- At the time of the survey visit, classroom teaching consisted of delivery methods that included technology. Students were interactive and attentive.

Faculty:

- There is one full-time faculty and six part-time faculty. Most faculty are doctorally or masters prepared, with experience in nursing education.
- The Faculty Handbook with policies is detailed and well-written, including faculty orientation. However, faculty files did not contain evidence of an orientation, which policy indicates is to be completed within 90 days of date of hire. When asked, it was reported there was no evidence of orientations and no one knew if orientations had been completed.
- Mr. Heath, the one full-time faculty member, stated he is supported by the Program Director and administration. Mr. Heath stated he has the time and resources to accomplish the required work.
- The full-time faculty position was not filled until June 2, 2017. The program was out of compliance with Rule 214 until this time due to not having full-time faculty other than the director.
- Faculty development offers continuing education credits, is related to nursing education, and is reflected in faculty files. Policy indicates all faculty are eligible for funds to attend the annual conference of the Texas Association of Vocational Nurse Educators.
- Faculty attend regularly scheduled meetings and decision-making is reflected in meeting minutes.
- A variety of means are used to evaluate faculty, including Program Director observations and evaluations in the classroom and clinical settings, and student course evaluations.

Students:

- The program admitted one cohort of 14 in March 2017. A cohort of 13 graduated in February 2017. At the time of the survey, students were in the second quarter of the curriculum plan.
- Student policies are well written and, according to the students, were being followed.

- Each student's progress is closely monitored with formal plans utilized for remediation. Communication with students is continuous to assess and guide them throughout the program.
- Students expressed feeling fully supported by the Program Director and faculty. They indicated the Program Director and faculty are caring, knowledgeable, and available. Students stated that rules of the program are enforced.
- Students expressed concerns about disruption in adjusting to the new Program Director and regarding the low census in the clinical facilities during clinical learning experiences.

Clinical Learning Experiences:

- Prior to providing patient care at clinical sites, students practice in the skills lab. Low fidelity mannequins are available in the lab for training, practice and skills check-off. There is not a simulation lab at BTCL.
- Clinical learning experiences correlate with didactic content.
- At the time of the survey, clinical rotations were limited to one facility. This puts student learning at a disadvantage since there is not a diverse patient population across the lifespan. Course and clinical objectives may not be met by the current single facility for required courses, such as Maternal/Child Health and Pediatrics.
- A second facility was unable to take students due to compliance issues of the facility. The Program Director and students indicated there were two sites during the first quarter and seven students were assigned to each facility.
- It was reported that students were evaluated by faculty and received formative and summative evaluations with progression documented across the curriculum. Program Evaluator reviewed clinical evaluations, and found that while the clinical evaluation tool appeared to be completed, some were signed by the faculty and the student while some were only signed by faculty. The space where the clinical site should have been indicated was blank. Most of the clinical evaluations were not signed by students, even though there was a place for their signature. Mr Heath stated that evaluations from the previous term were lost and faculty had re-created them. Program Evaluator found incomplete evaluations from the first quarter in a separate folder.
- Faculty supervise students in all clinical settings. Preceptors are not utilized.
- All active clinical affiliation agreements were not in place. One clinical affiliation agreement was current; while the other clinical affiliation agreement was not available for review by Program Evaluator. When reported to the program by the Program Evaluator, the agreement not available was sent via email to Program Evaluator after the conclusion of the survey and was dated beginning in January 2017. Program Evaluator confirmed the clinical affiliation agreement with the administrator of the clinical facility.
- Clinical affiliation agreements were reviewed and found to be lacking and inaccurate. There were clinical affiliation agreements on file from inception of the program but the clinical sites have not been used. Clinical affiliation agreements associated with unused clinical sites need to be removed. Since clinical sites need to be evaluated for ability to meet learning objectives, if the clinical site is deemed appropriate in the future, new affiliation agreements should be obtained.
- The Program Director indicated she will visit potential clinical sites to assure clinical experiences meet clinical learning objectives.

Facilities, Resources, and Services:

- Students have twenty-four (24) hour access to online resources.

- The nursing program is housed on the second story of a large, spacious building with nearby parking, and student friendly open areas with modern technology where students can gather to study or take breaks.
- Classrooms are well-lit, and spacious. Media equipment is available for every classroom including a computer at each student desk.
- There are two skills labs with three beds in each lab, low fidelity mannequins, and other equipment needed for the VN Education Program. The skills labs are equipped with modern technology for teaching use by VN Education Program faculty.
- Three out of six skills lab beds were not in working condition. During the survey exit interview, the administrators indicated the three non-working beds were removed and replaced with one working bed.
- The Program Director and full-time faculty have large private offices. Part-time faculty share office space and have private areas to counsel students as needed.
- There is a large auditorium for multi-purpose use with modern technology on the first floor of the building.
- During the facility tour, Program Evaluator noted that some areas of the building were uncomfortably warm. The administrators indicated one air conditioner compressor was being replaced. This was not verified.
- The Program Director and faculty share an administrative assistant who conducts tours of the school, answers telephone calls, and files records. A need was expressed for a designated person to provide clerical assistance for the VN Education Program.

Records and Reports:

- Faculty files provide evidence of faculty qualifications and responsibilities.
- The Total Program Evaluation (TPE) plan contains all required content, and meeting minutes reflect implementation of the plan.
- With the exception of completed clinical evaluation tools, current student records contain required documents.
- Past student records contained all required documents according to Board Rule 214.12.

DRAFT LETTER

July 21, 2017

Stacey L. Forte', MSN, RN, Director
Vocational Nursing Education Program
Bell Tech Career Institute
14602 Presidio Square Boulevard
Houston, TX 77083

Dear Ms. Forte':

At the July 20-21, 2017 meeting, members of the Texas Board of Nursing (Board) considered the report of the June 28-29, 2017 survey visit to Bell Tech Career Institute Vocational Nursing Education Program in Houston, Texas. It was the decision of the Board to accept the report of the survey visit and impose the requirements and conditions in the attached Board Order.

A Requirement is a mandatory criteria based upon program assessment directly related to the rules that must be addressed in the manner prescribed.

If you have any questions, please contact Board Staff at susan.lee@bon.texas.gov or 512-463-4631.

Sincerely,

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

copy: Raffy O. Bell, MBA, CEO
Texas Workforce Commission

BEFORE THE TEXAS BOARD OF NURSING

ORDER OF THE BOARD

In the Matter of
Bell Tech Career Institute
Vocational Nursing Education Program
In Houston, Texas

A public meeting of the Texas Board of Nursing, hereinafter referred to as the Board, was held on July 20, 2017, 333 Guadalupe, Tower II, Room 225, Austin, Texas, to consider the report of the June 28-29, 2017 survey visit to Bell Tech Career Institute Vocational Nursing Education Program in Houston, Texas, pursuant to Section 301.157, Texas Occupations Code and 22 Tex. Admin. Code Chapter 214, based upon compliance with Rule 214.

After review and due consideration of the filed materials, the Board hereby ACCEPTS the report of the survey visit to Bell Tech Career Institute Vocational Nursing Education Program in Houston, Texas and hereby imposes the following conditions and requirements:

Requirements:

1. The program shall identify and secure additional clinical sites that will provide opportunities for students to meet clinical learning objectives and provide evidence to Board Staff no later than September 1, 2017.
2. The program shall provide copies of new, signed clinical affiliation agreements with two or more facilities to Board Staff no later than September 1, 2017.
3. The program shall provide to Board Staff a projected schedule of clinical assignments and clinical sites for the remainder of 2017 no later than September 1, 2017.
4. The program shall provide syllabi with outlines for each course to Board Staff no later than September 1, 2017.

Entered this 20th day of July, 2017

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