

**Report of Survey Visit to
Vernon College in Wichita Falls, Texas
Vocational Nursing Education Program**

Summary of Request:

Consider the report of the September 5-6, 2017 survey visit to Vernon College Vocational Nursing (VN) Education Program in Wichita Falls, Texas. The survey visit was conducted due to low NCLEX-VN® pass rates for two subsequent years and warning status. This survey visit was conducted by Education Consultant Susan Lee, PhD, RN, CNE. The previous survey visit was June 2014.

Historical Perspective:

- Vernon College was established in 1970 as Vernon Regional Junior College.
- Campus construction began May 1971 and included an Academic Science Center, Administration-Fine Arts Center, Applied Arts Center, Library, and Student Center.
- On September 5, 1972, classes met for the first time on the Vernon campus with a total of 608 students.
- The VN Program combined with Bethania School of Vocational Nursing in Wichita Falls in 1976.
- The college has campuses in Wichita Falls, Vernon, and Seymour, Texas.
- Vernon College is accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC). The next reaffirmation is scheduled for 2019.
- Sherrie Denham, RN, MSN, was appointed Program Director for the VN program in 2015 and has been with the college for 6 years.

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	Full with Warning	74.49%	73/98
2015	Full	73.81%	93/126
2014	Full	80.15%	105/131
2013	Full	86.60%	84/97
2012	Full	88.19%	112/127

- The program submitted a Self-Study Report (SSR) in 2016 due to the 2015 NCLEX-PN® examination pass rate of 73.81%. 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 2016.
- Major areas needing corrective actions with accompanying time frames for implementation were identified in the SSR. Some of the corrective measures included: 1) increasing minimum passing score from 75% to 78%; 2) not rounding grades up; 3) students provide proof of extenuating circumstances related to excessive absences; 4) reassessing and revising the re-entry policy for failures/withdrawals, 5) stricter attendance policies, and 6) increasing faculty capacity in simulation.
- The approval status was changed to Full With Warning at the April 2017 Board meeting.

Summary of Survey Findings (See Attachment #1):

Positive Aspects of Survey Visit:

- The VN Program Director is an experienced educator having taught in the VN program for 4 years prior to her appointment as Director. She is well respected by administration, faculty, and students.
- The Director is dedicated to administration of the VN program and does not have full-time teaching responsibilities.
- Administration expressed full support for the VN program and it fulfills a continued need for nurses in the communities served.
- Students interviewed expressed satisfaction with the program.
- The program of study incorporates a variety of methods for course delivery strategies, including face-to-face instruction, flipping the classroom, and simulation.
- All clinical learning experiences are faculty supervised with hands-on direct-patient care in clinical settings. The program utilizes simulation to prepare students for clinical practice and for remediation.
- The program has a variety of active contracts with clinical affiliating agencies that provide a wide array of clinical learning experiences.
- VN graduates are able to obtain employment in the local and surrounding areas including hospitals, clinics and long term care agencies.
- The college provides funds every year for faculty to attend the annual conference of the Texas Association of Vocational Nurse Educators (TAVNE) and other conferences related to education and the use of simulation.

Concerns of Survey Visit:

- One classroom was noticeably damp and musty, with moisture on the desks and papers. The Program Director states that this also occurred in one of the skills labs, where a dehumidifier was installed and faculty volunteered personal time to remove mold.
- While there is a campus-wide orientation, there is not a nursing education department orientation for new nursing faculty members at the onset of employment.

- Cognitive levels of exams across the curriculum are in the lower domains of Bloom's taxonomy: knowledge, comprehension, application. The upper domains, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation, are not utilized.

Rationale for Staff Requirements:

Findings from the survey visit indicated efforts have been and are being implemented to improve student outcomes. Board Staff has provided rationales for the requirements in the Board Order below:

Staff Rationale for Requirement #1:

The condition of one classroom indicated an unhealthy environment for students and faculty. 214.11. (d). (5) set forth, "Classrooms, laboratories, and conference rooms shall be conducive to learning".

Requirement #1:

The program shall identify and implement corrective measures that will provide for all classrooms to be conducive to learning and provide this information to Board Staff no later than April 1, 2018.

Staff Rationale for Requirement #2:

A nursing faculty orientation is not provided. 214.7.(a).(6).(A) states, "Written policies for nursing faculty shall include: plans for faculty orientation to the nursing program".

Requirement #2:

The program shall develop written policies for orientation of new faculty to the nursing program and provide this information to Board Staff no later than April 1, 2018.

Staff Rationale for Recommendation #1:

Cognitive levels on exams need to be in the upper domains of Bloom's taxonomy (i.e. analysis, synthesis, and evaluation) to measure clinical decision-making and critical thinking skills.

Recommendation #1:

The program is encouraged to develop exams with cognitive levels using the upper domains of Bloom's taxonomy and provide this information to Board Staff no later than April 1, 2018.

Staff Recommendation:

Move to accept the report of the October 26-27, 2017 survey visit to Vernon College Vocational Nurse Education Program and issue the requirements and recommendation in the attached letter and Board Order (see Attachment #2).

**Summary of Survey Visit to
Vernon College in Wichita Falls, Texas
Vocational Nursing Education Program**

Purpose of Survey Visit: The survey visit was conducted due to low NCLEX-VN® pass rates for two subsequent years.

Date of Visit: September 5-6, 2017

Board Staff Conducting Survey Visit: Susan Lee, PhD, RN, CNE, Education Consultant

Program Evaluator met with:

- Dusty Johnston, Ed.D., President, Vernon College
- Shana Drury, Associate Dean of Instructional Services
- Sherrie Denham, MSN, RN, VN Program Director
- Pam Rotz, RN, Faculty, VN Assistant Program Director
- Tracie Fulten, BSN, RN, Faculty
- Mary Jane Batchelor, BSN, RN, Faculty
- Reisa Johnston, LVN, Faculty
- Zela Haney, RN, Faculty
- Casey Kolacek, RN, Faculty
- Cassie Shaw, BSN, RN, Faculty
- Michael Scott, RN, Faculty
- Rachel Herrmann, RN, Faculty
- Kimberly Perkins, BSN, RN, Faculty
- Eight 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:

- Administration indicated the nursing program fulfills a need in the local and surrounding community and has comparable status to other education units in the college.
- The VN program is included in the Vernon College Organization Chart as part of Instructional Services along with Associate Degree Nursing, Health Management, Emergency Medical Services, Pharmacy Technician and Surgical Technology.
- The VN program is offered in Wichita Falls and at extension sites in Vernon and Seymour, Texas.
- Sherrie Denham, MSN, RN has been the Program Director for two years and taught in the VN program for four years prior to her appointment as director.
- Ms. Denham does not have a teaching assignment and is dedicated to her program director duties.

Program of Study:

- There are two tracks in the program of study: full-time days, and part-time evenings. The full-time, 12-month program of study is designed to be completed in three semesters. The part-time, 18-month evening program is designed to be completed in five semesters
- The program is comprised of a total of 1574 clock hours: 716 didactic hours and 858 clinical hours.
- The program of study includes all Board required content.
- The organization of the curriculum moves from simple to complex and designed to ensure students are competent in skills prior to entering the clinical setting. Further, it facilitates educational mobility as students indicated a desire to advance their nursing education upon completion of this program.
- *The Differentiated Essential Competencies (DECS) (2010)* are incorporated into the curriculum.
- Test blueprints include cognitive levels in the lower domains of Bloom's taxonomy: knowledge, comprehension, application. The upper domains, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation, are not utilized.
- Standardized testing is used throughout the program for admission, and progression. High-stakes standardized testing is not used for graduation purposes.

Faculty:

- Nine full-time and eight adjunct faculty teach in the VN program. At the time of the survey visit, there was one part-time faculty vacancy on the Vernon campus.
- Faculty are comprised of experienced and less-experienced members in the area of teaching. Faculty are diverse in content expertise and clinical backgrounds.
- VN faculty workload is 42 load hours per semester. Load hours only include actual face-to-face time with students. There are no load hours for course or exam preparation or office hours to meet with students or work on committees. For clinical, one-half load hours are equivalent to each hour of actual clinical time, which faculty indicates varies from the

ADN faculty with clinical load hours accounting for one full hour of clinical load hours for each hour of actual clinical time. Board Staff discussed disparities between the ADN and VN programs with administration.

- Faculty members are actively engaged in curriculum planning, implementation, and evaluation for each of their courses.
- Faculty has regular monthly meetings.
- Faculty development includes attendance at the Texas Association of Vocational Nurse Educators (TAVNE) annual conference, and the national Laerdal simulation conferences; and guest speakers who present on topics such as flipping the classroom.
- The majority of faculty members were available for interview.
- Faculty policies are in place per BON requirement.
- While there is a campus-wide orientation, there is not a nursing education department orientation for new nursing faculty members at the onset of employment.

Students:

- The program admits three cohorts per year into the day program, two on the Wichita Falls campus in January and August, and one cohort on the Vernon and Seymour campuses in August. The number admitted varies based on the number of qualified applicants.
- The program admits two cohorts every 18 months to the evening program; one in Wichita Falls and one in Vernon.
- At the time of the survey visit, 166 students were in the program.
- Students reported they enrolled in the VN program because of the desire to become a nurse, reputation of program, and location.
- Students agreed the program of study is preparing them for clinical practice, citing clinical learning experiences as being a valuable component of the program.
- Students verbalized that the strict attendance policy was an issue as it related to health and outside employment.
- Students cited challenges as being overwhelmed with the amount of information and a lack of consistency. Reasons given for attrition are: course failures, finances, and family issues.
- Students acknowledged faculty as being available to assist with ensuring student success.
- Student policies are well-defined, written, and available to students.
- There are no student representatives who have input into the development of policies.
- Eight students were interviewed, four from the first-semester cohort, and four from the final-semester cohort.
- All of the interviewed students expressed a desire to further their education to become an RN.

Clinical Learning Experiences:

- The program has active clinical contracts with a number of affiliating agencies (e.g. rehabilitation, long-term care, clinics, hospitals, health care centers, skilled nursing facilities, home health, and the Department of Health and Human Services) that provide a variety of clinical learning experiences to meet the objectives and outcomes of the curriculum.

- Skills lab and simulation lab activities are utilized.
- Intravenous therapy is taught as part of the clinical learning experiences.
- Faculty provides supervision during all clinical learning experiences and maintains BON required ratios. Preceptors are not utilized.
- Clinical learning experiences are scheduled to correlate with didactic content.
- Criteria for selecting clinical agencies are well-defined.
- The clinical evaluation tools are progressive and are based upon course content and the DEC's. Clinical evaluation tools include formative and summative evaluations throughout the program. Student expectations are well-defined.

Facilities, Resources, and Services:

- A full array of student services is offered, including restrooms, faculty and student lounges, lockers, break areas, study areas, and a snack bar.
- Computer labs are available in the nursing building and students have 24-hour access to online resources.
- There is ample, open parking available adjacent to the program building.
- The VN program building is conducive to learning, with spacious classrooms, and well-equipped skills and simulation labs.
- The program director and full-time faculty have furnished private offices.
- The program has full-time clerical and secretarial support.
- The program director agreed that resources are adequate to meet all teaching needs.
- One classroom was noticeably damp, with moisture on the desks and papers. This occurred in one of the skills labs, where a dehumidifier was installed and faculty volunteered personal time to remove mold.

Records and Reports:

- Faculty files provide evidence of faculty qualifications, official transcripts, and performance appraisals.
- The program has a Total Program Evaluation (TPE) Plan that is used for decision making.
- Meeting minutes consistently reflect implementation of the TPE.
- Student files contain all documents required by Rule 214.
- Clinical affiliation agreements are up to date.
- Storage of files meets the requirement of Rule 214.

DRAFT LETTER

October 26, 2017

Sherrie Denham, RN, MSN, Director
Vocational Education Program
Vernon College at Wichita Falls
4105 Maplewood Avenue
Wichita Falls, Texas 76308

Dear Ms. Denham:

At the October 26, 2017 meeting, members of the Texas Board of Nursing (Board) considered the report of the September 5-6, 2017 survey visit to Vernon College Vocational Nursing Education Program in Wichita Falls, Texas. It was the decision of the Board to accept the report of the survey visit and impose the requirements and recommendations in the attached Board Order.

Requirement:

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

Recommendation:

Recommendations are suggestions based upon program assessment indirectly related to the rules to which a program must respond but in a method of their choosing.

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: Shana Drury, Associate Dean of Instructional Services

ORDER OF THE BOARD

In the Matter of
Vernon College
Vocational Nursing Education Program
In Wichita Falls, Texas

A public meeting of the Texas Board of Nursing, hereinafter referred to as the Board, was held on October 26, 2017, 333 Guadalupe, Tower II, Room 225, Austin, Texas, to consider the report of the September 5-6, 2017 survey visit to Vernon College Vocational Nursing Education Program in Wichita Falls, 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 Vernon College Vocational Nursing Education Program in Wichita Falls, Texas and hereby imposes the following requirements and recommendation:

Requirements:

1. The program shall identify and implement corrective measures that will provide for all classrooms to be conducive to learning and provide this information to Board Staff no later than April 1, 2018.
2. The program shall develop written policies for orientation of new faculty to the nursing program and provide this information to Board Staff no later than April 1, 2018.

Recommendation:

1. It is recommended that the program develop exams with cognitive levels using the upper domains of Bloom's taxonomy and provide this information to Board Staff no later than April 1, 2018.

Entered this 26th day of October, 2017

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