

**Report of Survey Visit  
Texas State Technical College in Harlingen, Texas  
Associate Degree Nursing Education Program**

**Summary of Request:**

Consider the report of the July 30, 2019 regular survey visit to Texas State Technical College (TSTC) Associate Degree Nursing Education (ADN) program in Harlingen, Texas, following Board decision to change the approval status from Initial to Full Approval in January 2019.

**Historical Perspective:**

- TSTC was created in 1967 as the James Connally Technical Institute of Texas A&M and in 1969, it became an independent state system with a new name Texas State Technical Institute (TSTI), and its own Board of Regents.
- Beginning in 1970 as the demand for technical education continued, campuses have been established in Abilene, Breckenridge, Brownwood, Fort Bend County, Harlingen, Marshall, North Texas, Sweetwater, Waco, and Williamson County.
- TSTC is the only college in Texas to adopt a funding model based entirely on student employment outcomes – aligning with its purpose of strengthening Texas with a highly skilled, technical competent workforce.
- In 2016, the decision was made to integrate all 10 TSTC campuses in order to standardize operations and programs to better serve the state.
- TSTC is accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC).
- Other nursing programs on TSTC campus sites are in Sweetwater and Breckenridge. These are independent programs from TSTC in Harlingen.
- TSTC Harlingen is a two-year state college offering courses in vocational and technical areas including seven Associate of Science degree programs in four fields of study and an Academic Core Curriculum. Twenty-nine Associate of Applied Science degree programs and 31 Certificates of Completion are offered to students.
- TSTC Harlingen offered an ADN program that was approved by the Board in July 2012 but voluntarily closed in 2015 due to poor performance. The program was on conditional approval when it closed. All students who were enrolled completed the program through a teach-out.
- TSTC Licensed Vocational Nurse (LVN)-to-ADN program in Harlingen was established in 2017 and is a face-to-face program with clinical experiences having direct faculty supervision and preceptor assignments.
- Shirley Byrd, MSN, RN, Program Chair for the LVN-to-ADN (ADN) program, has served as the Director since inception of the program. She has over 60 years of nursing experience with eight of these being in nursing education.
- The NCLEX-RN® examination pass rates are provided below:

<b>NCLEX Examination Year</b>	<b>BON Approval Status</b>	<b>Pass Rates</b>	<b>Number of First Time Candidates (Passed/Total)</b>
2019	Full	Pending	
2018	Initial	86.21%	25/29
2017	New Program		

### **Summary of Survey Findings:**

See survey visit report in Attachment #1.

### **Positive Aspects of Survey Visit:**

- Shirley Byrd, MSN, RN, Program Chair for the LVN-to-ADN (ADN) program has served as the Director since inception of the program in 2017. She has over 60 years of nursing experience with eight of these years in nursing education.
- Administration is highly supportive of Ms. Byrd and indicated the ADN program adds substantial value to the college and community.
- Faculty members offer a rich diversity in their education and experiential backgrounds.
- Students chose the TSTC ADN program because of the program's positive reputation in the community, faculty availability and one-on-one assistance, and the elevated practice standards of graduates.
- The contracted clinical affiliation agencies are abundant and provide rich clinical learning experiences. Students expressed that these experiences allow them to fully utilize their skills and that facilities are inviting.
- The faculty and student handbooks are exceptionally well-written, detailed, and contain all Board required content in Rule 215.7.
- Job recruitment fairs on the TSTC campus and onsite opportunities to enlist in RN-to-BSN programs provide graduate with career options.
- The program has been awarded grant funding to purchase more hospital beds and tables for the Simulation Lab and to provide faculty development specific to nursing.

### **Concerns of Survey Visit**

- The clinical evaluation tools include formative and summative evaluations for clinical courses but do not correlate with level clinical objectives. All clinical evaluation tools are identical and do not indicate progression across the curriculum.
- A full-time assistant serves as administrative and clerical support for all nursing programs. The director and faculty perform the majority of their own clerical work, are required to assist with student registration, advising, and tutoring which limits their focus on program needs.
- Faculty Development consists of institution wide workshops and online teaching training. However, there is limited time in the faculty schedule for nursing specific conferences and workshops.
- TSTC ADN program policies require that students are currently licensed as a vocational nurse while in the program. There is no process in place for re-verification of a student's nursing license if it expires before the student graduates.

**Staff Rationale for Requirement #1:**

Rule 215.10(f) states, "Clinical evaluation tools shall be correlated with level and/or course objectives and shall include a minimum of a formative and summative evaluation for each clinical in the curriculum." The clinical evaluation tools include formative and summative evaluations for clinical courses but do not correlate with level clinical objectives. All clinical evaluation tools are identical and do not indicate progression across the curriculum.

**Requirement #1:**

The program shall ensure that clinical evaluation tools correlate with level clinical objectives, indicate progression across the curriculum and reflect professional nursing competencies and shall submit copies of revised clinical evaluation tools to Board Staff no later than March 1, 2020.

**Staff Rationale for Requirement #2:**

Rule 215.11.(c) states that the director/coordinator and faculty shall have adequate secretarial and clerical assistance to meet the needs of the program. A full-time assistant serves as administrative and clerical support for all nursing programs. Board staff discussed this as a concern since the director and faculty perform the majority of their own clerical work, are required to assist with student registration, advising, and tutoring which limits their focus on program needs.

**Requirement #2:**

The administration shall develop an action plan to provide adequate secretarial and clerical assistance to meet the needs of the program and submit the plan to Board Staff no later than March 1, 2020.

**Staff Rationale for Recommendation #1:**

Rule 215.7.(b)(5) states that a plan for nursing faculty development shall be offered to encourage and assist faculty members to meet the nursing program's needs as well as individual faculty members' professional development needs. Faculty Development consists of institution wide workshops and online teaching training. However, there is limited time in the faculty schedule for nursing specific conferences and workshops. Board staff discussed the need for time to attend nursing conferences and training.

**Recommendation #1:**

It is recommended that administration and nursing faculty discuss satisfactory arrangements that will allow time for nursing specific faculty development. Please provide a response to Board Staff no later than March 1, 2020.

**Staff Rationale for Recommendation #2:**

TSTC ADN program policies require that students are currently licensed as a vocational nurse while in the program. There is no process in place for re-verification of a student's nursing license if it expires before the student graduates.

**Recommendation #2:**

It is recommended that administration develop a process for re-verification of any student's vocational nursing license that will expire while in the ADN program. Please provide a response to Board Staff no later than March 1, 2020.

**Staff Recommendation:**

Move to accept the report of findings from the July 30, 2019 survey visit to the Texas State Technical College Associate Degree Nursing Education Program in Harlingen, Texas and issue the requirements and recommendations in the attached letter (see Attachment #2).

**Summary of Survey Visit  
Texas State Technical College in Harlingen, Texas  
Associate Degree Nursing Education Program**

**Purpose of Survey Visit:** Routine Survey Visit following Full Approval

**Date of Survey Visit:** July 30, 2019

**Board Staff Conducting Visit:** Beverly Skloss, MSN, RN, Nursing Consultant for Education

**Education Consultant met with:**

- Administrators
  - Lance Eastman, Vice President of Student Learning
  - Andy Weaver, L. P., AAS EMS, Division Chair/EMS Director
  - Jean Lashbrook, RN, Associate Provost
  - Shirley Byrd, MSN, RN, Department Chair/Program Director
- ADN Faculty
  - Adrienne Reyes, MSN, RN,
  - Maria T. Gutierrez, MSN, RN
  - Ruby Byrd, MSN, RN, CCRN, Adjunct
- Six ADN students

**Education Consultant reviewed:**

- Curriculum plan and all syllabi;
- Faculty & Student Handbooks;
- Clinical evaluation tools and clinical affiliation agreements;
- Faculty and student files;
- Total Program Evaluation Plan (TPE) and data;
- Faculty meeting minutes; and
- 2018 Nursing Education Program Information Surveys (NEPIS)

**Education Consultant:**

- held initial conference with administration;
- toured program facilities;
- observed a class in session; and
- conducted an exit interview with administrators.

**Summary of Findings:**

Administration:

- Shirley Byrd, MSN, RN, Program Chair, has served as the Director since inception of the program in 2017. She has over 60 years of nursing experience with eight of these being in nursing education.
- Ms. Byrd is well qualified to administer the program and is accountable for the planning, implementation, and evaluation of the ADN nursing program.

- Administration indicated the ADN program adds substantial value to the college and community.
- Administration is highly supportive, continuously evaluates the needs of the program and understands the need for more nurses in the local area.
- Ms. Byrd indicated she is fully supported by administration and has the authority to direct the ADN program in all phases. She carries a teaching load of three hours per week each semester.

#### Faculty:

- The ADN program instruction has been carried out by two full-time faculty and one adjunct faculty. An additional full-time faculty was scheduled to begin on August 1, 2019, and the program was in the process of recruiting another qualified adjunct faculty.
- Full-time faculty workload is 40 hours per week on a 12-month contract. Load hours include a combination of classroom and clinical teaching, student tutoring and remediation, office hours, preparation time, and committee/curriculum work.
- The Director ensures clinical contracts are in place with clinical agencies, evaluation of clinical agencies, scheduling of clinical experiences, and that a collaborative relationship is maintained with clinical sites.
- The Director currently provides clinical coordination; however, when vacant faculty positions are filled, the teaching load for one faculty will be decreased and this person will assume the clinical coordination role.
- Faculty members offer a rich diversity in their education and experiential backgrounds. One has 17 years of nursing experience with over 14 years specific to nursing education, one has 45 years of nursing experience with 17 years related to nursing education and one has 18 years of nursing experience and is new to teaching.
- Faculty indicated orientation is college wide and nursing department specific that is structured and individualized with an assigned nursing faculty mentor. The faculty handbook contains detailed information on the structure of orientation including a plan for faculty development.
- Faculty are actively engaged in curriculum planning, implementation, and evaluation.
- Faculty meetings are held at least monthly on a regular basis and minutes of meetings are maintained. There is documentation that faculty committee members are involved in planning and decision-making.
- Faculty Development consists of institution wide workshops and online teaching training. However, there is limited time in the faculty schedule for nursing specific conferences and workshops. Board staff discussed the need for time to attend nursing conferences and training. Faculty may apply for tuition and registration fee assistance from the college.
- The faculty handbook is exceptionally well-written, detailed, and contains all Board required content in Rule 215.7.
- Faculty members voiced concerns about adding a new cohort of 10 to begin in January 2020 without additional clerical support.
- Future plans: Onsite faculty training related to the new simulation manikins including how to carry out clinical scenarios.

#### Students:

- At the time of the survey visit, there was one cohort of 29 students enrolled in the program with scheduled graduation on August 16, 2019.

- The ADN program admits one cohort every August. There were 88 qualified applicants for Fall 2019 and 30 were accepted to begin in late August, 2019.
- Student policies are well-written, well-defined, provided to all students during orientation and the student handbook contains all Board required content.
- Students have an active student governance, the Student Advisory/Student Concerns Advisory Committee with student representatives elected by their peers. This committee provides a formal mechanism for student input into the various functions of the ADN program.
- Students stated they enrolled in the ADN program because of the good things they heard about the program, they earned their vocational nursing certificate at TSTC, the convenient location, a previous nursing instructor is faculty at TSTC, the low cost and family attended school at TSTC.
- Students indicated they like the structure, positive environment, the instructor's open door policy and willingness to help, the student friendly clinical sites, the confidence instilled by faculty, and the student nurse's club that raises money to help each one with end of year school expenses.
- Students cited challenges as multiple-multiple exam questions, learning so much all at once, the short length of the program, and balancing assignments with personal life.
- The program has implemented remediation of at risk students that includes counseling, mentoring opportunities and help sessions. Mandatory remediation in any course may be implemented in order for the student to master required material.
- Student Action Plans are utilized if a problem exists with performance behaviors. This allows a cooperative effort between faculty and the student in exploring possible ways to remediate or correct deficiencies.
- Students have input into faculty evaluations by completing a faculty and course evaluation at the end of each course.
- Future plans: Approval was granted by the Board to start a second yearly cohort in January 2020 of 10 students, a January 2021 cohort of 20 and a January 2022 cohort of 30. This will give TSTC admissions in Spring and Fall semesters every year. The maximum number of students admitted will be 60 in one academic year.

#### Program of Study:

- The ADN program is a 12 month, three-semester full-time program, consisting of 12 semester credit hours (SCH) each semester for a total of 36 SCH. If the student is beginning with general education courses, the time frame for the program is five semesters.
- The ADN Nursing Education Program utilizes a face-to-face learning environment. The course resources for students are available on TSTC's Learning Management System (LMS).
- All exams are computer based, administered on campus and proctored.
- Test blue prints are available for all exams in each course.
- The integrated competency based curriculum for the ADN program indicates leveling of nursing content, advancing in difficulty from simple to complex.
- The *Differentiated Essential Competencies (DECS)(2010)* are incorporated throughout the curriculum as evidenced in course syllabi.
- Standardized testing is used throughout the program for progression, remediation, and graduation purposes.

- The program has a Community Advisory Committee that meets at least one time each year. Minutes for these meetings reflect input from the committee regarding the ADN program.
- Future plans: The ADN program has received additional grant funds that will be utilized to add hospital beds and tables to the simulation laboratory and for faculty development nursing related education.

#### Clinical Learning Experiences:

- The TSTC ADN program has six active clinical contracts with a variety of clinical agencies including acute care hospitals, long term care facilities, and long term acute care facilities in Harlingen and Raymondville.
- Clinical experiences consist of computer activities, skills lab, simulation lab and hands on patient care in contracted facilities.
- Students practice in the skills and simulation lab prior to providing hands-on care in the clinical setting.
- Student assignments correlate to student learning needs identified in the course syllabi.
- Faculty provide supervision during clinical learning experiences with the exception of the last semester of the program when preceptors are utilized so students may gain practice experience with Registered Nurses. BON required faculty-to-student ratios are maintained throughout the program.
- The clinical evaluation tools include formative and summative evaluations for clinical courses but do not correlate with level clinical objectives. All clinical evaluation tools are identical and do not indicate progression across the curriculum.

#### Facilities, Resources, and Services:

- The ADN program is housed in the Nursing Education Center Building along with the Vocational Nursing Education Program (VN) on the TSTC campus. The facility is appropriately equipped and offers a rich learning environment.
- The ADN director has a large private office located in the nursing office suite along with the VN director and all nursing faculty. Full-time faculty have fully furnished private offices in close proximity to the director. Adjunct faculty utilize an open area in the suite with partitions and each area includes a desk and computer.
- The facilities are spacious, include ADA compliant restrooms, a large, well-lighted student lounge and break areas located in the building. Vending machines, a refrigerator, tables, chairs, and a microwave oven are available.
- TSTC has a Learning Resource Center that includes a 24 hours per day online library of resources, databases, and services. Library holdings include current nursing books, journals, and national nursing databases such as CINAHL and MEDLINE.
- TSTC offers free tutoring and academic support services to all enrolled students. A wide variety of counseling services is available to students.
- The Student Assistance Program offers free short term counseling services up to five visits per issue per year, to help students. The services include, but are not limited to, personal and family counseling, improving study skills, and time management.
- There are three classrooms that hold up to 30 students. One is designated for the ADN program and one is designated for the VN program. The third classroom may be scheduled for use by either program. The classrooms are modern, spacious, well-lighted and equipped with up-to-date audio visual equipment (AV).

- The computer lab is equipped with 30 computers at separate desks with privacy screen dividers. AV equipment is also available for use.
- There is one large skills lab solely for the ADN program with four patient bays separated by privacy curtains, each with a hospital bed and hospital type equipment, and four low-to-mid fidelity adult manikins. There are tables and chairs for students thus the lab may be used for lectures related to skills.
- The skills lab has three sinks with hot and cold running water, ample cabinet and counter space and all equipment necessary for the teaching-learning process. An abundant storage room is available across from the lab for excess supplies/equipment.
- The Simulation Lab contains two separate private patient rooms, each with a high fidelity simulation manikin, wall mounted hospital equipment, bedside tables and a control/observation room. In addition, there is a large laundry room with a washer and dryer.
- A full-time assistant serves as administrative and clerical support for all nursing programs including the directors. Board staff discussed this as a concern since the director and faculty perform the majority of their own clerical work, are required to assist with student registration, advising, and tutoring which limits their focus on program needs.

#### Records and Reports:

- Student and faculty files are maintained with all required documents in a locked room in locked file cabinets and are compliant with Board Rule 215.12.
- Official student academic records are maintained on the in the office of the Registrar.
- Minutes of faculty meetings are maintained in the program director's office.
- Clinical affiliation agreements are current.
- The Total Program Evaluation (TPE) is available with evidence of decision-making in faculty meeting minutes. Outcomes are documented on the TPE document as well.

DRAFT LETTER

October 24, 2019

Shirley Byrd, MSN, RN, Director  
TSTC Associate Degree Nursing  
1902 N. Loop 499  
Harlingen, Texas 78550

Dear Ms. Byrd:

At the October 24-25, 2019 meeting, the members of the Texas Board of Nursing (Board) considered the report of the survey visit to the Texas State Technical College Associate Degree Nursing Education Program in Harlingen, Texas. It was the decision of the Board to accept the report of the survey visit conducted on July 30, 2019 and impose the requirements and recommendations as indicated 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.

A Recommendation is a suggestion 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, or if we may be of any assistance, please contact Board Staff at [beverly.skloss@bon.texas.gov](mailto:beverly.skloss@bon.texas.gov) or 512-318-3219.

Sincerely,

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

Copy: Lance Eastman, Vice-President of Student Learning

**BEFORE THE TEXAS BOARD**

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**ORDER OF THE BOARD**

In the Matter of  
Texas State Technical College  
Vocational Nursing Education Program  
In Harlingen, Texas

A public meeting of the Texas Board of Nursing, hereinafter referred to as the Board, was held on October 24, 2019, 333 Guadalupe, Tower II, Room 225, Austin, Texas to consider the report of the July 30, 2019 survey visit to Texas State Technical College Associate Degree Nursing Education Program in Harlingen, Texas, pursuant to Section 301.157, Texas Occupations Code and 22 Tex. Admin. Code Chapter 215, based upon compliance with Rule 215.

After review and due consideration of the filed materials, and other interested parties, if any, the Board hereby ACCEPTS the report of the survey visit to Texas State Technical College Associate Degree Nursing Education Program in Harlingen, Texas, and hereby imposes the following requirements:

Requirements:

1. The program shall ensure that clinical evaluation tools correlate with level clinical objectives, indicate progression across the curriculum and reflect professional nursing competencies and shall submit copies of the revised clinical evaluation tools to Board Staff no later than March 1, 2020.
2. The administration shall develop an action plan to provide adequate secretarial and clerical assistance to meet the needs of the program and submit the plan to Board Staff no later than March 1, 2020.

Recommendations:

1. It is recommended that administration and nursing faculty discuss satisfactory arrangements that will allow time for nursing specific faculty development. Please provide a response to Board Staff no later than March 1, 2020.
2. It is recommended that administration develop a process for re-verification of any student's vocational nursing license that will expire while in the ADN program. Please provide a response to Board Staff no later than March 1, 2020.

Entered this 24<sup>th</sup> day of October, 2019

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