

**Report of Survey Visit
El Paso Community College in El Paso, Texas
Vocational Nursing Education Programs**

Summary of Request:

Consider the report of the routine survey visit on November 13-14, 2019, to El Paso Community College Vocational Nursing Education Programs at Mission del Paso and the Multiple Entry-Exit Program (MEEP) Dual-Credit High School track in El Paso, Texas.

Historical Perspective:

- El Paso Community College (EPCC) is accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC).
- The EPCC Vocational Nursing (VN) Education Program was established in the 1950s by the El Paso Independent School District (ISD) and EPCC assumed administrative control in 1972.
- In 1996, EPCC initiated the dual-credit high school VN track at Riverside High School in El Paso, Texas. The program later transitioned from Riverside to Bel-Air and Silva Magnet High Schools in El Paso, Texas.
- In 1998 a generic or traditional VN Education Program was initiated at the Mission del Paso (MDP) campus of EPCC. MDP is an extension of the main college campus.
- EPCC has operated an Associate Degree Nursing (ADN) program since 1972. The EPCC Associate Degree Nursing (ADN) Education Program is accredited by the Accreditation Commission for Education in Nursing (ACEN).
- Paula Gail Meagher, MSN, RN, was appointed Dean of Nursing for the VN and ADN Education Programs in May of 2009 and has 46 years of nursing experience with 23 of these being in nursing education. She was a student in the first VN graduating class at EPCC.

NCLEX-PN® Examination Pass Rates for Mission del Paso

NCLEX® Examination Year	BON Approval Status	Pass Rates	Number of First Time Candidates (Passed/Total)
2018	Full	100.00%	30/30
2017	Full	93.75%	30/32
2016	Full	96.15%	25/26
2015	Full	89.66%	26/29
2014	Full	86.84%	33/38

NCLEX-PN® Examination Pass Rates for MEEP Dual-Credit High School Track

NCLEX® Examination Year	BON Approval Status	Pass Rates	Number of First Time Candidates (Passed/Total)
2018	Full	96.88%	31/32
2017	Full	100.00%	25/25
2016	Full	91.67%	33/36
2015	Full	91.43%	32/35
2014	Full	93.33%	14/15

Summary of Survey Findings:

(See Survey Visit Report in Attachment #1.)

Positive Aspects of Survey Visit:

- Though the Administration express support of Ms. Meagher and stated that the nursing program is vital to EPCC and the community, her ability to make final decisions related to admission and dismissal of students was not consistent with this.
- EPCC has operated a successful dual credit high school VN program since 1996 and this program has been labeled as a “MEEP” program.
- Students indicated faculty members are always available, knowledgeable in their areas of expertise, communicate effectively, and understand their learning needs.
- Students stated that they enrolled in the VN program due to faculty being so helpful and knowledgeable, and the program’s great reputation.
- Faculty are dedicated, well-qualified, cohesive and function as a team with the best interest of students in mind.
- Nursing counselors are available to provide psychosocial support to students.
- Clinical affiliation agencies provide a variety of clinical learning experiences.

Concerns of Survey Visit:

- Admission criteria were not included in the Nursing Student Handbook.
- Student files, per Rule 214.12, were not made available to Board Staff for review.
- The Dean of Nursing cites not having full authority to administer the VN Programs related to program policies, per Rule 214.6.
- EPCC has an active student governance through the Student Nurses Association; however, VN student representation is not present. VN students voiced they do not participate in student governance activities.
- Faculty voiced concerns about not having the ability to make key decisions regarding program policies and the curriculum.
- Faculty expressed their current workload does not allow sufficient time for committee/curriculum work due to workload requirements.
- There is limited time in the high school faculty schedule for nursing conferences and workshops due to workload requirements.
- VN faculty voiced concerns about the lack of faculty orientation to the nursing programs.
- There is a vacant full-time lab assistant position at the MDP campus. Board Staff expressed this as a concern since the faculty are required to set-up, prep and clean-up the lab during their work hours, limiting their focus on other program needs.

- Minutes of faculty meetings are maintained from previous years in the Program Coordinator's office, but Board Staff noted only one set of VN faculty meeting minutes for 2019 was in the file.

Staff Rationale for Requirement #1:

Rule 214.6.(i) states the director/coordinator shall have the authority to direct the vocational nursing education program in all its phases, including dismissal of students and enforcement of student policies. The Dean of Nursing voiced concerns about not having full authority to administer the VN Programs based on program policies, specifically in the area of dismissal of students.

Requirement #1:

The college administration shall develop a plan that will allow the Dean of Nursing full authority to administer the vocational nursing education programs, including enforcement of student policies, such as admission, progression, probation, and dismissal of students. The administration shall submit the plan to Board Staff no later than March 2, 2020.

Staff Rationale for Requirement #2:

Rule 214.8(d) requires that the Nursing Student Handbook shall have well-defined, written nursing student policies based upon statutory and Board requirements, including nursing student admission. Board Staff noted the admission criteria for both VN Programs were not documented in the student handbook.

Requirement #2:

The Program Director and faculty shall revise the Student Handbook to include admission criteria for vocational nursing students. The Program Director shall submit the Student Handbook admission policies to Board Staff no later than March 2, 2020.

Staff Rationale for Requirement #3:

Rule 214.8(i) requires nursing students to have mechanisms for input into the development of academic policies and procedures and curriculum planning. Non-participation in student governance activities was voiced by the VN students.

Requirement #3:

The Program Director and faculty shall develop a plan that will provide opportunities for vocational nursing students to participate in student governance. The Program Director shall submit the plan to Board Staff no later than March 2, 2020.

Staff Rationale for Requirement #4:

Rule 214.7.(b)(3) states that written policies for nursing faculty shall also include plans for faculty orientation, faculty development, and faculty workload. VN faculty voiced concerns about the lack of orientation to the nursing programs. The two VN tracks are in different settings with different time constraints. There is limited time in the high school faculty schedule for nursing conferences and workshops due to workload requirements. Faculty also have limited time to devote to committee work due to the heavy workload. (The teaching expectation for instruction alone is 21 hours each week.)

Requirement #4:

The Program Director shall review faculty policies to ensure that adequate plans are in place for orientation of new faculty, time and resources for faculty development, and a workload policy that allows time for committee and curriculum work. The Program Director shall submit the policies and how they will be implemented to Board Staff no later than March 2, 2020.

Staff Rationale for Requirement #5:

Rule 214.12.(a)(3) states that administrative records shall include minutes of faculty meetings for the past three years. Minutes of faculty meetings are maintained from previous years in the Program Coordinator's office. Board Staff noted only one set of meeting minutes documented for 2019.

Requirement #5:

The vocational nursing faculty shall have regular faculty meetings and maintain meeting minutes. The Program Director shall submit samples of nursing faculty meeting minutes from January 1, 2020, through June 1, 2020, to Board Staff no later than June 1, 2020.

Staff Rationale for Recommendation #1:

Rule 214.7.(a)(2) states that "the faculty shall meet regularly and function in such a manner that all members participate in planning, implementing and evaluating the nursing program. Such participation includes, but is not limited to: the initiation and/or change in program policies, personnel policies, curriculum, utilization of affiliating agencies, and program evaluation." VN faculty voiced concerns about the inability to make key decisions regarding program policies and the curriculum that affect the VN program. ADN and VN faculty have shared faculty meetings and since there are more ADN faculty than VN faculty, voting on VN agenda items is perceived to be skewed.

Recommendation #1:

It is recommended that the Program Director develop a plan that will allow the vocational nursing faculty vote with an equal weight in decision-making that affects the vocational nursing program. The Program Director shall submit the plan to Board Staff no later than March 2, 2020.

Staff Rationale for Recommendation #2:

There is a vacant full-time lab assistant position at the MDP campus. Faculty are assuming the tasks of lab set-up and preparation, and clean-up following the lab experiences, thus reducing their time for other instructional responsibilities.

Recommendation #2:

The administration should pursue aggressive efforts to fill the vacant lab assistant position to relieve nursing faculty of lab responsibilities. The Program Director shall submit a response to this recommendation to Board Staff no later than June 1, 2020.

Staff Recommendation:

Move to accept the report of the findings from the November 13 - 14, 2019, survey visit to the El Paso Community College Vocational Nursing Education Programs at Mission del Paso and the Multiple Entry-Exit Program Dual-Credit High School track in El Paso, Texas, and issue the requirements and recommendations as indicated in the attached letter and Board Order (See Attachment #2).

Summary of Survey Visit
El Paso Community College in El Paso, Texas
Vocational Nursing Education Programs
Mission del Paso and Multiple Entry-Exit Program Dual-Credit High School Track

Purpose of Survey Visit: Routine Survey Visit

Date of Survey Visit: November 13 – 14, 2019

Board Staff Conducting Visit: Ann Amaefule, MSN, RN, and Beverly Skloss, MSN, RN

Education Consultants met with:

- Administrators:
 - Paula Mitchell, EdD, RN, Associate Vice President of Instruction and Student Success
 - Gail Meagher, MSN, RN, Dean of Nursing
 - Pauline Ballesteros, MSN, RN, RN Program Coordinator & VN Coordinator in the Summer at Rio Grande Campus
 - Laura Jimenez, BSN, RN, VN Program Coordinator at MDP and the MEEP dual-credit high school track
- Eight VN Faculty (generic and MEEP dual-credit high school tracks)
- 12 VN Students (generic and MEEP dual-credit high school tracks)

Education Consultants reviewed:

- curriculum plan and all syllabi;
- Faculty and Student Handbooks;
- clinical evaluation tools and clinical affiliation agreements;
- program goals, objectives, and outcomes;
- Total Program Evaluation Plan (TPE) and data;
- faculty meeting minutes;
- faculty and student files; and
- 2019 Nursing Education Program Information Surveys (NEPIS).

Education Consultants:

- held initial conference with administration and staff;
- toured program facilities at the MDP campus;
- observed a generic track class in session at the MDP campus;
- viewed photos of two high school facilities for the MEEP dual-credit track; and
- conducted an exit interview with the Dean of Nursing, administration, and faculty.

Summary of Findings:

Administration:

- Both VN Programs have the full support of administration. Administration evaluates the needs of the programs, and understands its value to the college and the community.

- Paula Gail Meagher, MSN, RN has served as Dean of Nursing since May 2009. Ms. Meagher has been a nurse for 46 years with half of that time serving in nursing education. Ms. Meagher stated she was a graduate of the first VN class at EPCC in 1973.
- Ms. Meagher is well qualified to administer the programs and is accountable for the planning, implementation, and evaluation of the VN Programs at EPCC.
- Ms. Meagher indicated she is supported by administration; however, she expressed not having full authority to administer the VN Programs based on program policies, specifically in the area of dismissal of students. Board Staff addressed this with administration, including their plan to follow-up with executive administration regarding Rule 214.6.

Faculty:

- Faculty members meet Board qualifications, teach to their area of expertise, and offer a rich diversity in their education and experiential backgrounds in nursing practice.
- Six full-time faculty members and six part-time faculty members teach in the generic VN track. Three faculty hold a master's degree in nursing, seven hold a bachelor's degree in nursing, and two hold an associate's degree in nursing.
- There are four full-time faculty members who teach in the MEEP dual-credit high school track. Two hold a master's degree in nursing and two hold a bachelor's degree in nursing.
- One faculty member serves as the RN Program Coordinator & VN Program Coordinator at the Rio Grande Campus and one faculty member serves as the VN Program Coordinator at MDP and for the MEEP dual-credit high school track.
- Full-time faculty workload is 40 hours per week on a 9-month contract. Load hours include a combination of classroom, lab and clinical teaching, student tutoring and remediation, office hours, preparation time, and committee/curriculum work.
- Nursing faculty, including the VN Program Coordinator, schedule clinical rotation experiences for students and maintain collaborative relationships with the clinical sites.
- At the time of the survey visit, there were no vacant faculty positions. There has been a history of faculty turnover at the Silva Magnet High School campus. New nursing faculty have since been hired and begun teaching VN courses at Silva Magnet High School.
- Faculty utilize the outcomes of students' standardized testing scores to improve their teaching strategies.
- Faculty voiced concerns about not having the ability to make key decisions regarding program policies and curriculum. ADN and VN faculty have joint faculty meetings. The ability to make decisions is a concern since there are more ADN faculty than VN faculty, affecting voting power during meetings. Board Staff addressed this with administration.
- Minutes of faculty meetings are maintained for previous years in the Program Coordinator's office. Board Staff noted only one set of meeting minutes was documented in 2019.
- The nursing faculty handbook is well-written, detailed, and contains all Board required content in Rule 214.7.
- College-wide faculty development at the campus consists of sessions related to teaching and learning. All VN faculty are required to attend these sessions.
- There is limited time in the high school faculty schedule for nursing specific conferences and workshops due to workload requirements. Board Staff discussed this as a concern related to the importance of nursing-specific professional development opportunities for faculty.

- Faculty at the MDP campus are engaged in professional development activities in nursing. Several stated they attended the Texas Association of Vocational Nurse Educators' annual conference. Additional faculty expressed a desire to attend this conference.
- Faculty expressed their current workload does not allow sufficient time for committee/curriculum work due to workload requirements. Board Staff discussed this concern with administration.
- VN faculty voiced concerns about the lack of orientation to the nursing programs. Board Staff discussed this concern with the Dean of Nursing.

Students:

- At the time of the survey visit, 52 students were enrolled in the generic VN track and 40 students were enrolled in the MEEP dual-credit high school track. Currently, 92 VN students are enrolled at EPCC.
- During the 2018-2019 academic year, 79 students graduated from EPCC's VN Programs.
- The generic track admits a cohort twice per year in the Fall and Spring semesters. A new cohort of 25 students began in August, 2019. The next admission cycle will be in Spring, 2020.
- The MEEP dual-credit high school track admits one cohort per year. A new cohort of 25 students began in August, 2019.
- Students stated they enrolled in the VN program because of the good reputation, the proximity to home, the program structure, the availability of faculty members, faculty being knowledgeable in their areas of expertise, the different ways instructors teach, and the compassion nursing faculty demonstrate to their students.
- Students cited challenges as balancing life and nursing school, the transition to having new instructors, multiple exam questions, learning so much all at once, and learning the different expectations for each clinical rotation.
- Student learning needs and obstacles to their success are identified throughout the program. Remediation of at-risk students includes counseling, mentoring opportunities, and tutoring to aid students to master required material. Remediation and tutoring are offered by nursing faculty.
- Student advising is offered by designated nursing counselors.
- The nursing program has well-defined written nursing student policies that are provided to students at the start of the program; however, documentation of admission criteria was not found in the student handbook. Updates to the policies are publicly accessible to all students.
- EPCC has an active student governance through the Student Nurses Association; however, VN student representation is not present.
- VN students expressed they do not participate in student governance activities. Board Staff discussed this as a concern since nursing students are expected to provide input regarding the curriculum, student policies, and student issues.
- Students have input into the evaluation of teaching effectiveness by completing a faculty and course evaluation at the end of each course.

Program of Study:

- The VN curriculum is offered over 12 months, consisting of three semesters (including prerequisites) and two summer sessions, totaling 49-51 semester credit hours (SCH). Students completing the program are awarded a Vocational Nursing Certificate.

- The curriculum indicates there is 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 and clinical evaluation tools.
- Both programs utilize a web-enhanced, face-to-face, teaching-learning environment, except for the Leadership and Professional Development course that is delivered online. The course resources for students are available on EPCC's Learning Management System (LMS).
- All exams are paper and/or computer-based, administered on campus and are proctored.
- Standardized testing is used throughout the program for progression, remediation, and graduation purposes.
- Board Staff attended a class session related to obstetrical nursing. The material was presented logically and was well organized. Students were interactive with the instructor and asked questions.
- Plans: EPCC has received funding to create an interprofessional simulation laboratory.

Clinical Learning Experiences:

- EPCC's VN Programs have active clinical contracts with a variety of clinical agencies, including acute care hospitals, long-term care facilities, and day care centers.
- EPCC's Health Career and Technical Education, Math and Science Department has a designated office that secures and maintains affiliation agreements for nursing.
- Clinical experiences consist of computer activities, skills lab, simulation lab, and hands-on care in the clinical settings.
- The clinical evaluation tools provide for formative and summative evaluations. If weaknesses are identified in the clinical setting, measures are taken to provide remediation to students.
- Nursing faculty coordinate skills and simulation labs as well as clinical site rotation schedules.
- Students practice in the skills and simulation lab prior to providing hands-on care in clinical settings.
- Student assignments correlate to the student learning needs identified in the course syllabi.
- Faculty provide supervision during clinical learning experiences, except for VNSG 1166, a practicum course that utilizes preceptors for students to gain practice experience with LVNs.
- BON required faculty-to-student ratios are maintained throughout the program.

Facilities, Resources, and Services:

- The generic track is housed in the Health Science Building at the MDP campus. The MEEP dual-credit high school track is offered at Silva Magnet and Bel-Air High Schools. Both programs are appropriately equipped, offering rich, positive learning environments.
- The Dean of Nursing has a private office that is located at the Rio Grande campus, where the ADN Program is offered. This campus is approximately 30 minutes away.
- Full-time nursing faculty have access to furnished private and shared office space.
- All facilities include spacious classrooms, equipped with a computer and audiovisual equipment for presentations. All classrooms include SMART Boards and instructor media.
- The MDP Campus has an Education Resource Center that includes online library resources, databases, and services. Library holdings include current nursing books and

national databases such as CINAHL and MEDLINE. Reference books are also available to nursing students.

- The MDP campus has two skills/simulation labs solely for the VN Program. The larger lab has a working Pyxis machine, one large and one small storage room with shelves and cabinets, locked file cabinets, eight hospital-type beds with privacy curtains, eight low-fidelity adult manikins and various hospital-type equipment. Tables and chairs are set-up for student use.
- The smaller lab at the MDP campus has five hospital-type beds, various hospital-type equipment, eight low-fidelity adult manikins, two mid-fidelity manikins, and three high-fidelity manikins (one newborn and two adult). There is a computer storage area with 28 laptops for student use and one computer workstation for faculty use.
- Both labs have abundant shelves/cabinets for storage space, tables/chairs set-up for student use, and hot/cold running water.
- There is a vacant full-time lab assistant position at the MDP campus. Faculty voiced this as a concern since they are required to set-up, prep, and clean-up the lab during their work hours, which limits their focus on other program needs. Administration indicated that interviews are currently being conducted to fill this position.
- The MDP campus has two, 30-seat capacity, designated VN classrooms, three computer labs (must be scheduled) with a total of 72 desktop computers, and an Instructional Media Service Room with designated staff who print materials for faculty and students.
- The Education Resource Building on the MDP campus includes Student Support Services for math tutoring and coaching, a testing center, Center for Disabilities, a bookstore, a cafeteria, a large break area with a TV, tables, chairs (located inside and on the patio), microwaves, and games for student use and recreation.
- The high schools have similar facilities to the MDP campus with two classrooms solely for the VN students, faculty offices, and student and faculty break areas.
- Restrooms are adequate and ADA compliant on all campuses.
- Counseling services are available to all nursing students at no charge. Faculty may refer students to a nursing counselor, when appropriate.
- Two full-time assistants serve as administrative and clerical support for the ADN and VN Programs.

Records and Reports:

- There was a host of student and faculty files in the records room but current student files were not available for Board Staff review during the visit. Following the visit, sample student files were provided to Board Staff that satisfied the need. Even though the Student Handbook includes a receipt form indicating students have received policies and requirements (including eligibility information), evidence that students were provided the information lies in a sign-in sheet signed by all students who attended orientation.
- Minutes of faculty meetings are maintained in the Program Coordinator's office.
- Clinical affiliation agreements are current.
- The Total Program Evaluation (TPE) Plan is utilized for program planning and is evidenced in previous faculty meeting minutes and documented on the TPE Plan. Board Staff discussed the importance of VN faculty having the ability to make decisions regarding the program policies and curriculum.

DRAFT LETTER

January 23, 2020

Paula Gail Meagher, MSN, RN, Dean of Nursing
El Paso Community College
Rio Grande Campus
100 West Rio Grande Ave.
El Paso, TX 79902

Dear Ms. Meagher:

At the January 23 – 24, 2020, meeting, the members of the Texas Board of Nursing (Board) considered the report of the survey visit to the El Paso Community College Vocational Nursing Education Programs at Mission del Paso and the Multiple Entry-Exit Program Dual-Credit High School track in El Paso, Texas. The Board approved the findings in the survey visit and issue the requirements and recommendations in the attached Board Order. If you have any questions, or if we may be of any assistance, please contact Board Staff at ann.amaefule@bon.texas.gov or 512-463-4631.

Sincerely,

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

Copy: William Serrata, Ph.D., President
Steven E. Smith, Vice President of Instruction & Workforce Education
Paula Mitchell, Ed.D, Associate Vice President of Instruction and Student Success
Coordinators

BEFORE THE TEXAS BOARD

ORDER OF THE BOARD

In the Matter of
El Paso Community College
Vocational Nursing Education Programs
In El Paso, Texas

A public meeting of the Texas Board of Nursing, hereinafter referred to as the Board, was held on January 23, 2020, 333 Guadalupe, Tower II, Room 225, Austin, Texas, to consider the report of the November 13 - 14, 2019, survey visit to El Paso Community College Vocational Nursing Education Programs at Mission del Paso and the Multiple Entry-Exit Program Dual-Credit High School track in El Paso, 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 materials presented by Staff and filed by El Paso Community College in El Paso, Texas, and other interested parties, if any, the Board hereby ACCEPTS the report of the survey visit to El Paso Community College Vocational Nursing Education Programs at Mission del Paso and the Multiple Entry-Exit Program Dual-Credit High School track in El Paso, Texas, and hereby imposes the following requirements and recommendations:

Requirements:

1. The college administration shall develop a plan that will allow the Dean of Nursing full authority to administer the vocational nursing education programs, including enforcement of student policies, such as admission, progression, probation, and dismissal of students. The administration shall submit the plan to Board Staff no later than March 2, 2020.
2. The Program Director and faculty shall revise the Student Handbook to include admission criteria for vocational nursing students. The Program Director shall submit the Student Handbook admission policies to Board Staff no later than March 2, 2020.
3. The Program Director and faculty shall develop a plan that will provide opportunities for vocational nursing students to participate in student governance. The Program Director shall submit the plan to Board Staff no later than March 2, 2020.
4. The Program Director shall review faculty policies to ensure that adequate plans are in place for orientation of new faculty, time and resources for faculty development, and a workload policy that allows time for committee and curriculum work. The Program Director shall submit the policies and how they will be implemented to Board Staff no later than March 2, 2020.
5. The vocational nursing faculty shall have regular faculty meetings and maintain meeting minutes. The Program Director shall submit samples of nursing faculty meeting minutes from January 1, 2020, through June 1, 2020, to Board Staff no later than June 1, 2020.

Recommendations:

1. It is recommended that the Program Director develop a plan that will allow the vocational nursing faculty vote with an equal weight in decision-making that affects the vocational nursing program. The Program Director shall submit the plan to Board Staff no later than March 2, 2020.
2. The administration should pursue aggressive efforts to fill the vacant lab assistant position to relieve nursing faculty of lab responsibilities. The Program Director shall submit a response to this recommendation to Board Staff no later than June 1, 2020.

Entered this 23rd day of January, 2020

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