

**Consideration of Change in Approval Status
From Full Approval with Warning
to Full Approval and Report of Survey Visit
Vista College in El Paso, Texas
Vocational Nursing Education Program**

Summary of Request:

Consider the proposed change in approval status for the Vista College (Vista) Vocational Nursing (VN) Education Program in El Paso, Texas from Full Approval with Warning to Full Approval based upon the 2020 NCLEX-PN® examination pass rate, findings in the 2019 Self-Study Report, and compliance with Rule 214; and, the report of the December 1-3, 2020, virtual survey visit to the Vista College VN Program in El Paso, Texas, due to NCLEX-PN® pass rates for 2018 and 2019.

Historical Perspective:

- Vista College was initially accredited by the Council on Occupational Education (COE) in 1989. COE conducted a reaffirmation survey visit in Fall 2019.
- The Vista College VN Education Program has been in operation since 2004. The main campus is located in El Paso with extension campuses in Beaumont and Killeen.
- Tami Little, DNP, RN, CNE, is the Director of Nursing and has served in this position since August 2015.
- The NCLEX-PN® examination pass rates for the past five years are included in the table below:

Examination Year	BON Approval Status	NCLEX-PN® Examination Pass Rate	Number of First Time Candidates (Passed/Total)
2020	Full with Warning	81.56%	146/178
2019	Full	77.36%	164/212
2018	Full	76.33%	129/169
2017	Full	83.40%	201/241
2016	Full	87.93%	204/232

- Due to the 2018 NCLEX-PN® examination pass rate of 76.33%, the Program Director and faculty were required to submit a Self-Study Report (SSR) in 2019 that would evaluate factors that may have contributed to the graduates' performance on the NCLEX-PN® examination and a description of the corrective measures to be implemented.
- The Education Consultants conducted a conference call with the Program Director and faculty members on May 15, 2019, to discuss the process of developing the SSR. A comprehensive, in-depth SSR was received in the Board office on July 19, 2019.
- The Program Director and faculty members identified multiple factors in the SSR that may have contributed to the NCLEX-PN® pass rate falling below 80% as well as corrective measures to improve success, including the following activities:
 - review and revise the readmission process;
 - timely identify at-risk students;
 - strengthen faculty onboarding;
 - implement a formalized mentoring program to pair novice faculty with experienced faculty;
 - evaluate the current curriculum to determine alignment with the NCLEX test plan;
 - develop a comprehensive simulation program;
 - secure additional clinical affiliations to ensure a variety of rich clinical learning experiences; and
 - revise clinical evaluation tools.
- At the April 2020 quarterly Board meeting, the Board voted to change the approval status of the Vista College Vocational Nursing Education Program from Full Approval to Full with Warning and issued a requirement that, in accordance with Rule 214.4(a)(3)(A), a program survey visit would be conducted by Board Staff during 2020.
- A face-to-face visit to Vista College was initially planned for Fall 2020, but was cancelled due to the COVID-19 pandemic. A virtual program review was conducted based upon the extensive program documents to Board Staff and conference calls with the Program Director, Administration, nursing faculty, and nursing students through online meetings beginning December 1, 2020, and ending December 3, 2020.

Summary of Survey Visit:

Documents Provided to Board Staff Prior to Visit:

- Curriculum Plan, Philosophy/Mission, Objectives/Goals, Conceptual Framework
- Faculty and Program Director Job Description
- Faculty Handbook
- Student Handbook
- Clinical Preceptor Agreement
- Syllabi for all Courses
- Clinical Evaluation Tools
- Total Program Evaluation Plan
- Faculty Minutes
- Sample of Student Presentations and Assignments
- Virtual Tour of Resources and Facilities for the El Paso, Killeen, and Beaumont campuses

Individuals Participating in the Virtual Survey Visit:

Tami Little, DNP, RN, CNE, Corporate Director of Nursing

Vista College Administrators:

- Antonio Rico, El Paso Campus Director
- Ramona Garcia, El Paso Director of Education
- Shannon Fries, El Paso Nursing Coordinator
- Milton Anderson, Killeen Campus Director
- Madellaine Bart, Killeen Director of Education
- Donna Robertson, Killeen Nursing Coordinator
- Jorge Hinojosa, Beaumont Campus Director
- Kelsea Carrion, Beaumont Director of Education
- Vicki Dominguez, Beaumont Nursing Coordinator

Vista College Vocational Nursing Faculty:

- El Paso Campus:
 - John Rangel, BSN, RN
 - Nayeli Lerma, BSN, RN
 - Maria Villa, BSN, RN
 - Santiago Esquivel, BSN, RN
 - Veronica Hernandez, BSN, RN
 - Samantha White, LVN
- Killeen Campus:
 - Jessica Burnett, DNP, RN
 - Valerie Thompson, BSN, RN
 - Angela Rice, ADN, RN
- Beaumont:
 - Heather Chargois, BSN, RN
 - Patricia Terry, BSN, RN
 - Tiffany Victor, BSN, RN
 - Sarah Johnson, BSN, RN
 - Tanya Champion, MSN, RN

Vista College Vocational Nursing Students:

- Met virtually with 15 VN students of various levels from the three campuses.

Board Staff:

- Virginia D. Ayars, EdD, MS, RN, CNE

Process for the Survey Visit:

- Dr. Little scheduled online meetings between Board Staff and Vista College representatives and hosted the following meetings:
 - December 1, 2020, 9:00 am – 10:30 am – Meeting with Program Director
 - December 1, 2020, 10:30 am – 12 noon – Meeting with Nursing and Campus Administration
 - December 2, 2020, 9:30 am – 11:30 am – Meeting with Faculty

- December 2, 2020, 11:30 am – 12:30 pm – Meeting with Students
- December 3, 2020, 9:30 am – 10:00 am - Meeting with Program Director
- December 3, 2020, 10:00 am – 11:00 am – Exit Meeting

Administration and Organization:

- The Corporate Director of Nursing, Dr. Tami Little, reports directly to the Senior Vice President of Academics, meeting once weekly. Dr. Little has served in the leadership position since August 2015.
- Vista College operates 10 campuses, with eight campuses in Texas, one in Arkansas, and one in New Mexico. Three of the Texas campuses, in El Paso, Killeen, and Beaumont, offer VN Programs.
- The three campuses offer the same VN Program curriculum. Dr. Little oversees all campuses with nursing education programs and conducts face-to-face visits to each campus three times per year.
- Vista College's largest program is Vocational Nursing and, according to the administration is considered vital to the communities in each of the three locations. Administrators from all three campuses noted that the production of safe, competent Vocational Nurses is highly valued by each local community.
- The Vista College VN Program is continuing to increase their enrollment at all campuses.
- Two new positions were recently added, the Corporate Nursing Clinical Coordinator and the Corporate Nursing Simulation Coordinator, in an effort to ensure consistency regarding curriculum and clinical learning experiences campus wide.
- The campus administrators meet with Dr. Little three times weekly during regularly scheduled times.
- All three Vista campuses have utilized a hybrid format with both virtual and face-to-face learning, with coursework provided via synchronized virtual classes. In addition, all campuses offered nursing skills laboratory experiences face-to-face on campus.
- Plans for students to return to campus in a safe, orderly manner in alignment with COVID-19 guidelines were developed and operationalized at the onset of the pandemic.
- The Program Director has the authority to direct the VN Programs in all phases. The Program Director stated that the budget is not line-item, but categorized in buckets; financial resources are provided when requests are submitted.
- The Director does not have a teaching assignment.
- Vista College has clearly written policies related to COVID-19, including:
 - screening requirements for entry to the campus;
 - mandatory mask wearing and other personal protective equipment guidelines;
 - social distancing requirements including room capacity limits and furniture configurations;
 - guidelines for cleaning spaces and equipment;
 - contact tracing for potential and actual exposures; and
 - accommodations for missed learning experiences due to COVID-19 illness or exposure.

Faculty:

- The Faculty Handbook contains all essential elements set forth in Board Rule 214. 7 Faculty.

- Faculty members exhibit a rich diversity in their educational and professional backgrounds. Faculty experience in nursing education ranges from three months to 20 years.
- There are 20 full-time VN faculty members: two are DNP-prepared, 10 are BSN-prepared, three are MSN-prepared, three are ADN-prepared and two are LVNs. In addition, 22 part-time faculty members are in place.
- Faculty stated they worked diligently during the pandemic to ensure student safety and were empowered by campus leadership to enforce policies within their classrooms and all campus areas.
- It was evident during the virtual survey visit that the faculty support one another and work cooperatively to achieve mutual goals. One faculty member indicated that collaboration across campuses is in place and serves to strengthen the program.
- Professional development is apparent as well as tuition reimbursement with the goal of “growing your own”. Three of the current faculty members are currently enrolled in graduate nursing programs. NurseTim resources are provided, including sessions on how to facilitate online learning; faculty stated these were beneficial and appreciate the opportunity.
- A nursing instructor peer mentoring program was implemented for new instructors in January 2020. Faculty stated the peer mentoring program allowed novice faculty members with no teaching experience to be more engaged and to be able to identify within the first term of employment if they are well-suited for the role of nursing faculty.
- Faculty expressed they feel supported by the Corporate Nursing Director and the newly hired Corporate Nursing Clinical Coordinator and Corporate Nursing Simulation Coordinator.

Students:

- The Vista College Student Handbook includes all required information. Eligibility information is provided with a form indicating receipt of the process.
- Each of the three campuses offer three admission periods per year, in January, May, and September. Each campus has seats for 130 new students. The total enrollment in 2020 was 313 students.
- In 2020, 88 students graduated from the El Paso campus, 45 from the Killeen campus, and 42 from the Beaumont campus.
- Student policies are well-written, straightforward, and provided to all students during orientation; they include all Board-required content.
- New students entering the program in September 2020 received COVID-19 policies and discussed procedures during the new student orientation. Students complete a screening questionnaire, have their temperature assessed, and wear a date-specific wrist band when cleared for campus entry.
- Students who reported they had experienced COVID-19 infections or exposures were addressed in a timely manner by campus, nursing, and corporate leadership. Those students were not permitted on campus but continued to receive needed services.
- Interviewed students expressed that upon graduation, they are able to easily obtain employment. The majority of graduates remain in the community.
- Students interviewed expressed a high degree of satisfaction with the program. When asked why they choose Vista College, the popular response was Vista’s reputation in the

community. Several students shared they had worked with former Vista students and graduates and were impressed with the graduates' competence. One student stated they had conducted independent research and based on their findings selected Vista College.

- Students stated they feel faculty are available and communicative and timely respond to student questions and needs.
- Two students revealed they had considered dropping out due to the challenges of attending a VN Program during the global pandemic; however, they shared that faculty encouraged them to stay in the program and the students expressed gratitude for this counseling.
- Students shared that personal responsibilities for their own children's childcare and job duties were a significant part of their current student experiences. The students stated that faculty support has been ongoing as faculty has gone "over and above" to provide rigorous and appropriate learning opportunities in a nurturing, supportive environment.
- Students stated they understood how to work with the Student Ambassador to communicate any concerns and how to locate student policies.
- Students have an opportunity to evaluate faculty members, the curriculum, and clinical agencies by completing evaluations at the end of each course.

Program of Study:

- Vista College's 16-month, 73.5 quarter credit hour/1185 total contact hour curriculum is provided through 13 nursing courses. The day program is comprised of four levels while the evening program is presented in five levels.
- All Board required content areas are presented in the program. Didactic content is offered over 465 content hours, lab content over 180 hours, and clinical learning experiences over 540 hours.
- The *Differentiated Essential Competencies (DECs) (2010)* have been incorporated into the curriculum.
- The curriculum is provided in a block format (each course has a population or physiological framework and clinical practice follows the content).
- Syllabi are consistent in format and include appropriate content with clearly articulated learning objectives/outcomes.
- The nursing curriculum follows a linear progression making each term a prerequisite to the next. The curriculum indicates leveling of nursing content, advancing in difficulty from simple to complex.
- Standardized testing is utilized throughout the program to identify student remediation needs.
- At the time of the visit, the preliminary pass rate for the VN program was 81.56% with 146 of 178 first-time candidates successfully completing the NCLEX-PN®.
- The program meets a need in each of the three communities for a VN Program to meet the increased needs of the nursing workforce.

Clinical Learning Experiences:

- Clinical Evaluation Tools are based upon the *DECs*.
- Progression in expectations of student performance and competence is seen in the clinical evaluation tools across the program.

- Students practice in the skills lab and demonstrate basic competency prior to providing hands-on direct patient care. The program utilized the Governor's waiver that allows students in their final year/term of a nursing education program to meet clinical learning objectives by exceeding the 50% limit on simulated clinical learning experiences.
- Students would videotape themselves performing physical assessments and upload these to the program's learning management system for faculty review and evaluation.
- Faculty provide direct supervision during all clinical learning experiences at the clinical sites. Preceptors are utilized in the VN Capstone course during the final term of the program. Faculty indirectly supervise preceptor experiences and are responsible for evaluating students during the clinical learning experiences. Appropriate preceptor policies are in place.
- Each campus nursing director had established strong relationships with clinical sites in the geographical area that led to a broad array of student learning experiences.
- Prior to the global pandemic, Vista College had contracts with a wide variety of clinical affiliates, including long term care, acute care, and behavioral health. The students were provided rich clinical learning experiences; however, many of these opportunities were paused due to the pandemic.
- At the time of the survey visit, students were not able to go to all of the contracted clinical learning experiences. The sites continue to open dependent upon the location of the college with El Paso experiencing the most significant closures.

Resources and Facilities:

- Video tours of the three Vista College campuses were provided and the tours included faculty explaining all areas of the campus including the following:
 - Nursing classrooms;
 - Skills/simulation lab;
 - Administrative Assistant;
 - Director and faculty offices;
 - Library;
 - Study areas; and
 - Reception areas.
- The video tours were creative, resourceful, and served to showcase the highlights of each campus. Each campus director developed and submitted a targeted video tour and the hosts of each were positive, enthusiastic, and energetic.
- The video tours provided evidence that each campus met or exceeded the requirements of Board Rule 214.11. Facilities, Resources, and Services.
- Vista College subscribes to GALE Database services. Students can access GALE resources from campus or home.

Total Program Evaluation:

- The Total Program Evaluation (TPE) meets all requirements of Board Rule 214.13. The TPE evaluates nine components of the program throughout the year. Each evaluation consists of three phases: (1) assessment phase, (2) analysis and plan phase, and (3) implementation phase. Each phase is assigned to an individual or group within the program and allotted one month to complete the phase.

- Evaluation of each program component is cyclical with an assessment of the action plan starting a new cycle each year.

Pros and Cons of Program Review:

Pros:

- The consistent leadership of Dr. Little since 2015 is seen as a quality indicator of the Vista College VN program. The program analysis of the SSR received by Board Staff in 2019 identified the following key points for program improvement that will flourish as additional quality indicators:
 - Planning for faculty onboarding, mentoring, and development to strengthen the program of study;
 - Benchmarking the nursing curriculum against the NCLEX Test Plan to ensure the inclusion of necessary content;
 - Developing a comprehensive simulation program;
 - Securing additional clinical affiliations for a variety of clinical experiences; and
 - Identifying and remediating at-risk students.

Examples of Dr. Little's strategies include including nursing faculty from all sites in decision-making, careful monitoring of the programs at extension sites through regular site visits, protecting students and faculty during the pandemic, facilitating faculty development and growth through continuing education and formal classes, and following evaluation data on a regular basis for quality improvement.

Cons:

- None noted or expressed.

Staff Recommendation:

Move to change the approval status for the Vista College (Vista) Vocational Nursing (VN) Education Program in El Paso, Texas from Full Approval with Warning to Full Approval based upon the 2020 NCLEX-PN® examination pass rate, findings in the 2019 Self-Study Report, and compliance with Rule 214; and move to accept the report of the December 1-3, 2020, virtual survey visit to the Vista College VN Program in El Paso, Texas, due to NCLEX-PN® pass rates for 2018 and 2019 with no recommendations and/or requirements (See Attachment #1).

DRAFT LETTER

April 22, 2021

Tami Little, DNP, RN, CNE, Corporate Director
Vocational Nursing Education Program
Vista College
5919 BrookHollow
El Paso, TX 79925

Dear Dr. Little:

At the April 22, 2021, virtual meeting, the members of the Texas Board of Nursing (Board) considered the proposed change in approval status for the Vista College Vocational Nursing Education Program in El Paso, Texas from Full Approval with Warning to Full Approval based upon the 2020 NCLEX-PN® examination pass rate, findings in the 2019 Self-Study Report, and compliance with Rule 214; and, the report of the December 1-3, 2020, virtual survey visit to the Vista College VN Program in El Paso, Texas, due to NCLEX-PN® pass rates for 2018 and 2019.

Based upon the discussion and review of information, it was the decision of the Board to change the approval status for the Vista College Vocational Nursing Education Program in El Paso, Texas, from Full Approval with Warning to Full Approval and to accept the report of the virtual survey visit conducted on December 1-3, 2020.

If you have any questions or if we may offer assistance, please contact Board Staff at Virginia.ayars@bon.texas.gov or (512) 305-7660.

Sincerely,

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

Copy: Jim Tolbert, CEO Vista College

BEFORE THE TEXAS BOARD

ORDER OF THE BOARD

In the Matter of
Vista College
Vocational Nursing Education Program
In El Paso, Texas

A public meeting of the Texas Board of Nursing, hereinafter referred to as the Board, was held virtually on April 22, 2021, 333 Guadalupe, Tower II, Room 225, Austin, Texas to consider the approval status for the Vista College Vocational Nursing Education Program in El Paso, Texas, pursuant to Section 301.157, Texas Occupations Code and 22 Tex. Admin. Code Chapter 214, based upon the NCLEX-PN® examination pass rate for 2020, findings in the 2019 Self-Study Report, and compliance with Rule 214; and, to consider the report of the December 1-3, 2020, virtual survey visit to Vista College Vocational Nursing Education Program, pursuant to Section 301.157, Texas Occupations Code and 22 Tex. Admin. Code Chapter 214, due to NCLEX-PN® pass rates for 2018 and 2019.

After review and due consideration of the filed materials, and other interested parties, if any, the Board hereby CHANGES the approval status for Vista College Vocational Nursing Education Program in El Paso, Texas, from FULL APPROVAL WITH WARNING to FULL APPROVAL and ACCEPTS the report of the virtual survey visit to Vista College Vocational Nursing Education Program in El Paso, Texas.

Entered this 22nd day of April, 2021

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