

**Consideration of Findings from a Virtual Survey Visit
Weatherford College in Weatherford, Texas
Vocational Nursing Education Program**

Summary of Request:

Consider the report of the virtual survey review of the Weatherford College (VC) Vocational Nursing (VN) Education Program in Weatherford, Texas. A face-to-face visit to Weatherford College was originally planned for Fall, 2020, but was cancelled due to COVID-19 pandemic. A virtual program review was conducted based upon the extensive program documents submitted to Board Staff and conference calls with Program Director, Administration, nursing faculty, and nursing students through online meetings beginning on November 17, 2020, and ending on November 18, 2020.

Historical Perspective:

- WC is a public community college in Weatherford, Texas, that was established in 1869. The college has branch locations in Granbury and Decatur.
- WC is accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) and the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB). The most recent SACSCOC reaffirmation visit will be in 2022.
- The Vocational Nursing (VN) program is part of Health Science and includes the following programs: Associate Degree Nursing (ADN); RN to BSN Track, Sonography; Respiratory Care; Phlebotomy; Radiological Technology; Occupation and Physical Therapy; and Substance Abuse Counseling.
- The VN Program was established in the fall of 1975.
- Lori Boyd, BSN, RN was appointed Interim Program Director in October 2019 and became the Director in January 2020.
- The NCLEX-PN® examination pass rates for the past five years are presented in the table below:

Examination Year	BON Approval Status	NCLEX-PN® Examination Pass Rate	Number of First Time Candidates (Passed/Total)
2019	Full	90.48%	38/42
2018	Full	84.85%	55/66
2017	Full	98.08%	51/52
2016	Full	92.00%	23/25
2015	Full	97.73%	43/44

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
- Preceptor Handbook
- 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

Individuals Participating in the Virtual Survey Visit:

Lori Boyd, BSN, RN, VN Program Director

Weatherford College Administrators:

- Dr. Tod Farmer, President Weatherford College
- Dr. Mike Endy, Vice President of instruction and Student Services
- Katherine Boswell, MS, RN, Dean of Health and Human Sciences
- Adam Finley, Executive Dean, Student Services

Weatherford College Vocational Nursing Faculty:

- Karen Renee Smith, MSN, RN
- Larry Slawson BSN, RN
- Christy Walker, BSN, RN
- Jo Ellen Welborn, MSN, RN
- Kim Severson, BSN, RN

Weatherford College Vocational Nursing Students:

- Met virtually with the five student representatives who will be graduating in August 2021

Board Staff:

- Gayle P. Varnell, PhD, APRN, CPNP-PC

Process for the Survey Visit:

- Ms. Boyd created a Virtual Document Room on the college's web platform that included all the documents that would have been reviewed in a routine survey visit as well as the following videos and presentations:
 - VN office and lab video tour;
 - Teaching video for VNSG 1116. Ms. Stevenson's classroom;
 - Weatherford Campus video tour;
 - Leadership class group presentations;
 - Community research group projects;
 - VN Job Fair; and
 - Disease Control group presentations.

- Ms. Boyd scheduled online meetings between Board Staff and Weatherford representatives; and hosted the following meetings:
 - November 17, 2020, 9:00 – 10:00 a.m. between G. Varnell and L. Boyd
 - November 18, 2020, 9:00 – 10:00 a.m. - Meeting with Administrative Officers
 - November 18, 2020, 10:00 – 11:00 a.m. - Meeting with Nursing Faculty
 - November 18, 2020, 11:15 a.m. – 12:00 noon – Meeting with Students
 - November 18, 2020, 2:00 - 3:00 p.m. – Meeting with Program Director
 - November 18, 2020, 3:00 – 4:00 p.m. – Exit Report

Administration and Organization:

- The Director of the VN Program reports directly to the Dean of Health Sciences, Katherine Boswell, MS, RN. Ms. Boswell was the director of the VN program in 1980.
- There is a separate VN Faculty Handbook.
- The Dean/Director has the authority to direct the VN program in all its phases.
- The Dean/Director is mentoring a new faculty member by co-teaching a three-hour class and assisting in clinical instruction.
- Policies are in place and are enforced.
- The VN program shares an administrative assistant with the ADN program.

Faculty:

- The 2020-2021 Faculty Handbook includes faculty policies required in Rule 214: By-Laws for the Faculty Organization; Faculty Workload Policy; Faculty Evaluation; Job Descriptions; Faculty Orientation; Mentoring Guidelines; and Peer Review.
- The majority of the faculty have been at WC for several years. One faculty was hired in January 2020 and is being mentored by the Director who is co-teaching a course with her. One of the faculty graduated from WC with their VN and another faculty with their ADN degree.
- There are five full-time VN faculty. Two faculty have MSN degrees, and another faculty and the director are currently enrolled in MSN programs. There are also three BSN part-time faculty that go to the clinical areas with students.
- Four full-time faculty teach both clinical and didactic courses.
- The Director requested a new position be created to establish a designated faculty to tutor students. The request was granted by administration and has been very effective during the COVID-19 pandemic. The tutoring services have both day and evening times that meet the needs of individual students.
- Faculty voiced that they work as a team and have supported each other during the pandemic. They spoke highly of the leadership that their director has provided and the support that they have received from administration.
- WC administration allowed the nursing students to be the first students to return to campus in May of 2020. The graduates also were able to hold a pinning ceremony on campus following social distancing guidelines and family members were able to attend virtually.

Students:

- There is a 2020-2021 VN Student Handbook. There is a section that includes required policies for admission, readmission, transfer, progression, graduation, and dismissal. Eligibility information is provided in the Handbook and a form indicating receipt of this information. There is also information on the Differentiated Essential Competencies (DECs) (2010) in the Student Handbooks and it is threaded throughout the course syllabi

and clinical evaluations tools. The students even have the DEC's on a small card that fits behind their name badge.

- Students are permitted the opportunity for readmission after failing a course no more than one time.
- Currently there are 65 students who anticipate graduating in August 2021.
- The program admits students in August every year. This year, even with COVID-19, the program was able to increase enrollment stating that the only areas that were not available were the long term care facilities.
- Following Spring Break in March, all VN courses were moved to online with virtual clinical activities. The technology at WC made this an easy transition.
- Student representatives participate in faculty meetings as well as attending the Advisory Committee meetings.
- When VN students graduate, they have no difficulty finding employment in the area. The majority of graduates remain in the community.
- The five student representatives who were interviewed expressed a high degree of satisfaction with the program and confidence that the director and faculty are committed to their success.
- Students cited that the strengths of the program are the excellent clinical learning experiences at the local area hospitals which include obstetrics, pediatrics, emergency room, clinics, and acute care patients.
- The program meets a need in the community for a VN education program and receives strong support from clinical affiliates.

Program of Study:

- The 12-month, 42-semester credit hour curriculum is delivered through 13 nursing courses and three clinical courses. There is a separate course for maternal-neonatal nursing, pediatrics, mental health, and leadership and professional development.
- The *Differentiated Essential Competencies (DEC's) (2010)* have been incorporated into the curriculum.
- The curriculum is presented in a block format (each course has a population or physiological framework and clinical practice follows the content).
 - There is one admission a year so the faculty progress with the students through the three levels.
 - Clinical sites became available in June 2020 and Nursing courses moved back to campus in May. At the time of the survey visit, students were still not able to go to some facilities such as long term care facilities.
 - At the time of the visit, the preliminary pass rate for the VN program was 82.46% with 47 out of 57 graduates passing the NCLEX-PN®.

Clinical Learning Experiences:

- WC Clinical Evaluation Tools are based upon the *DEC's*.
- Progression in expectations of student performance and competence is seen in the clinical evaluation tools across the program.
- Students were allowed to continue in the hospitals and clinic facilities. Long-term care facilities remained unavailable at the time of the survey visit.
- Preceptors may be used in the clinics and long-term care facilities. Preceptors complete a daily evaluation of the student.

- VN and ADN students share lab space and equipment for nursing skills and simulation experiences.
- Medication administration is practiced in the skills lab and students are learning to use electronic health records.

Resources and Facilities:

- WC provided a video showcasing the Health Science Building that was built in 2014.
 - The tour included the following:
 - VN faculty private offices;
 - Lecture hall; and
 - Three separate skills/simulation labs with low, moderate, and high fidelity equipment and mannequins.
 - Reception area, study areas, and restroom facilities.
- WC provided a separate Tour of the WC Campus including the following:
 - Administration building; Welcome Center; Student Center; Cafeteria; Bookstore, Jim Wright Library; Academic Services; Fine Arts Building and Theatre, and Gymnasium.
- WC also provided a Teaching video for a VNSG 1116 Nutrition class.

Total Program Evaluation:

- Parts of the Total Program Evaluation (TPE) are reviewed during faculty meetings and a complete review is done annually. All elements required in Rule 214.13 are included and supporting documents and minutes of faculty meetings were submitted for review.
- TPE in October 2019 revealed need for action regarding hospital bed equipment. Three new beds were bought from budget and 1 approved by administration in January 2020.

Pros and Cons of Program Review:

Pros

- See Attachment #2 identifying Quality indicators.

Cons:

- There is one administrative assistant for both the VN and ADN program.

Staff Recommendation:

Move to accept the report of the findings from the virtual survey visit to Weatherford College Vocational Nursing Education Program in Weatherford, Texas, and issue one recommendation as indicated in the attached letter (See Attachment #1):

Recommendation #1: The WC administration is encouraged to provide a designated administrative assistant for the VN nursing program.

DRAFT LETTER

January 21, 2021

Lori Boyd, BSN, RN, Director
Vocational Nursing Program
Weatherford College VN Program
225 College Park Drive
Weatherford, TX 76086

Dear Ms. Boyd:

At the January 21, 2021 virtual Board meeting, members of the Texas Board of Nursing considered the findings from program review of the Weatherford College Vocational Nursing Education Program in Weatherford, Texas. It was the decision of the Board to accept the survey visit report and issue one recommendation:

Recommendation #1: The WC administration is encouraged to provide a designated administrative assistant for the VN nursing program.

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 offer assistance, please contact Board Staff at gayle.varnell@bon.texas.gov or (512) 621-5179.

Sincerely,

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

Copy: Dr. Tod Farmer, President Weatherford College
Ms. Katherine Boswell, Dean of Health and Human Sciences

**Regulatory Quality Indicators
 Weatherford College in Weatherford, Texas
 Vocational Nursing Education Program**

Basis:

Spector, N., Silvestre, J., Alexander, M., Martin, B., Hooper, J. I., Squires, A., & Ojemeni, M. (2020). NCSBN regulatory guidelines and evidence-based quality indicators for nursing Education programs. *Journal of Nursing Education*, 11(2), S2-S64.

Quality indicators for pre-licensure nursing education programs were identified in a NCSBN national, mixed-methods study of data and responses from nursing education programs, clinical educators, and board of nursing education consultants. The following table reflects a strong association between specific quality indicators and evidence from the survey visit.

Identified Quality Indicator	Findings from Survey Visit
Institutional administrative support of the nursing program	College President, Dean of Health Sciences expressed strong support for the VN program.
Consistent administrative leadership in the nursing program.	Although Program Director has been in the position since 2020 there have been many positive improvements made to the program as she is committed to the success of the students.
Consistent full-time faculty as opposed to reliance on adjunct faculty.	Five full-time faculty are in place. Two have their MSN degrees and two are in the process of obtaining their MSN. Two faculty graduated from.
Clinical experiences with actual patients that prepare students for the reality of clinical practice.	VN students were able to return to clinical practice in the hospital setting to work with actual patients, and even experience working with maternity and pediatric patients, a population not always available for VN students.
Quality simulation is used to augment clinical experiences.	There are 3 simulation labs ranging from low to mid-level fidelity to high fidelity.
Consistently has a pattern of NCLEX pass rates that meet set standards.	Pass rates for the past 5 years have been: 90.48% (2019), 84.85% (2018), 98.08% (2017), 92.00% (2016), and 97.73% (2015).
Faculty are able to role model professional behaviors.	Students described faculty as consistently encouraging them to reach higher goals. Students were complimentary in their comments about both faculty and hospital staff. Clinical ratios are lower than the 10:1.
Administrative support for ongoing faculty development.	Faculty listed several ways that their development is encouraged and supported.

	The college funded courses on online instruction when all teaching was moved to online. VN faculty are supported to attend the annual TAVNE meeting.
Comprehensive student support services especially services to assist at-risk students.	There is a designated faculty member who is available to assist students both virtually and in person during times that work with the student's schedule.
Ongoing systematic evaluation of the nursing program.	The Total Program Evaluation is reviewed and evaluated at faculty meetings and changes are made as necessary.