

Consideration of Findings from Virtual Survey Visit
 St. Philip's College in San Antonio and New Braunfels, Texas
 Vocational Nursing Education Programs

Summary of Request:

Consider the report of findings from a virtual survey visit to St. Philip's College Vocational Nursing (VN) Education Programs at two sites: San Antonio and New Braunfels. This visit served as a routine survey visit with the director, faculty, and students from both sites. The previous in-person survey visits to both sites were conducted in July 2013.

Historical Perspective:

- St. Philip's College in San Antonio, Texas, a Historically Black College and a Hispanic-serving Institution was founded in 1898, and is currently a part of the Alamo Colleges District. The mission is to empower diverse populations through educational achievement and career readiness.
- St. Philip's College VN Program in San Antonio, Texas, was established in 1949. St. Philip's College established a second VN program in New Braunfels, Texas, in 1967.
- Though the programs are connected by using a similar curriculum and a common Program Director, they are recognized as two VN programs with separate NCLEX-PN® exam test codes.
- NCLEX-PN® examination pass rates for the past five years for both programs are provided in the table below:

St. Philip's San Antonio VN Program

Exam Year	NCLEX-PN® Pass Rate	First Time Candidates (Passed/Tested)	BON Approval Status
2020	80.00%	52/65	Full Approval
2019	88.68%	94/106	Full Approval
2018	89.53%	77/86	Full Approval
2017	86.02%	80/93	Full Approval
2016	80.89%	127/157	Full Approval

St. Philip's College New Braunfels VN Program

Exam Year	NCLEX-PN® Pass Rate	First Time Candidates (Passed/Tested)	BON Approval Status
2020	100.00%	6/6	Full Approval
2019	100.00%	14/14	Full Approval
2018	100.00%	7/7	Full Approval
2017	100.00%	7/7	Full Approval
2016	100.00%	1/1	Full Approval

- Other health science programs offered on the San Antonio campus include surgical technology, radiology and diagnostic imaging, physical therapy, respiratory therapy, occupational therapy, and health information technology.
- Ivette Sterling, MSN Ed., RN-BC, serves as Program Director for both VN programs.
- Annette F. Bailey, BSN, RN, Program Coordinator for New Braunfels
- Dr. Rhonda Webb, DNP, MSN Ed., RN, Nursing Education Chairperson

Summary of Survey Visit:

Documents Provided to Board Staff Prior to Visit:

Board Staff reviewed the following items made available through OneDrive link. Documents for three years were provided indicating updates each year:

Curriculum Outline and Schedule for Required Courses

Syllabi for all Required VN Courses

Clinical Evaluation Tools

Faculty Handbook

Student Handbook

Preceptor Information, as appropriate

Total Program Evaluation Plan with Data

Director and Faculty Job Descriptions

List of Clinical Affiliating Agencies

Faculty Files

List of Current Faculty

Individuals Participating in and Schedule for the Virtual Survey Visit:

St. Philip's College hosted the online ZOOM meetings:

- September 28, 2021 – Meeting between:
 - Dr. Adena Williams Loston, President
 - Randall Dawson, MS Vice President of Academic Success
 - Jessica Cooper, MS, Dean of Academic Success for Health and Biosciences and Public Service
 - Dr. Rhonda Webb, DNP, MSN Ed., RN, Nursing Education Chairperson
 - Ivette Sterling, MSN Ed., RN-BC, Program Director for VN Programs
 - Annette Bailey, BSN, RN, Program Coordinator for New Braunfels site
 - Dr. Janice Hooper, Board of Nursing Staff
- September 28, 2021 – Meeting between Ivette Sterling, Program Director, and Dr. Hooper
- September 28, 2021 – Meeting between Dr. Hooper and VN students from both sites
- September 28, 2021 – Meeting between Dr. Hooper and VN faculty from both sites:
 - Annette Bailey, BSN, RN, Program Coordinator for New Braunfels
 - Veronica Furlow, BSN, RN, New Braunfels
 - Barbara Govan, MSN, RN, San Antonio
 - Tonya Costello, BSN, RN, San Antonio
 - Jodi Bellamy, MSN, RN, San Antonio
 - Esperanza Uriegas, BSN, RN, San Antonio
- September 29, 2021 – Pre-exit meeting between:
 - Dr. Rhonda Webb, DNP, MSN Ed., RN, Nursing Education Chairperson
 - Ivette Sterling, MSN Ed., RN-BC, Program Director for VN Programs

- Annette Bailey, BSN, RN, Program Coordinator for New Braunfels
- Dr. Hooper, Board of Nursing
- September 29, 2021 – Exit review between:
 - Dr. Adena Williams Loston, President
 - Randall Dawson, MS, Vice President of Academic Success
 - Jessica Cooper, MS, Dean of Academic Success for Health and Biosciences and Public Service
 - Dr. Rhonda Webb, DNP, MSN Ed., RN, Chair
 - Ivette Sterling, MSN Ed., RN-BC, Program Director
 - Annette Bailey, BSN, RN, Program Coordinator for New Braunfels

Findings from the Review of Documents and Online Meetings:

Administration and Organization:

- Dr. Loston has been President of St. Philip's College since 2007 and under her leadership, St. Philip's has grown from about 7,000 resident students to 13,000. Approximately 2,000 students graduate each year with a 50-60% persistence rate.
- New programs have been added to the college and the employment rate following graduation is 93%.
- A robust strategic planning model is used that allows participation and innovation.
- St. Philip's College nurtures its faculty and offers opportunities for growth. Most of the administrators and leaders in the administrative meeting described how they began at the college as Adjunct faculty and took the opportunities across the years to grow and develop into leadership roles.
- The administration expressed strong support for the nursing programs.
- There are over 4,000 students in the health programs and Dr. Loston spoke of adding new faculty in the Center for Health Professions, expansion of the Allied Health Building, and upgraded equipment.
- Three core competencies of St. Philip's are quality programs, student engagement, and community engagement. The colleges responsiveness to community health needs was demonstrated by their providing a setting for COVID-19 vaccinations.
- One of the goals of St. Philip's is to provide a community health clinic on campus.

Nursing Faculty:

- There are 13 full time nursing faculty in the VN programs and seven adjunct faculty, besides the Program Director and Chair. There is one vacant position.
- Eight nursing faculty participated in the survey visit interview, all of whom have years of experience as faculty at St. Philip's College and years of nursing practice in a variety of specialty clinical areas.
- Besides faculty, there are also staff to assist with remediation of students, advising, assistance with academic instruction, and simulation lab.
- One faculty serves as Clinical Coordinator.
- Faculty committees are in place with a recently added Faculty Development Committee. During a pre-COVID-19 partnership, St. Philip's faculty participated with San Antonio College faculty in faculty development workshops. Hopefully this will continue in the future.
- Several faculty will be attending the 2021 TAVNE meeting in Austin in October.
- New nursing faculty receive a strong orientation and are assigned a faculty mentor.

Nursing Students:

- Due to reduced enrollment resulting from COVID-19, students from both sites have been combined on the MLK (San Antonio) campus. As has occurred with many VN programs, the enrollment for VN programs is down this year.
- There are currently 67 total students in the VN program, 38 in Level I and 29 in Level III.
- The Student Handbook includes all required aspects in Rule 214.
- Eight Level III students were present for the interview including one originally from Mexico, one from Poland, and several Hispanic and African-Americans. They displayed maturity, sensitivity to others, and seriousness about their studies.
- Each student discussed his/her reasons for choosing nursing and for enrolling at St. Philip's College. All of them expressed their desire to provide caring, compassionate nursing care to patients. Several had decided to enter nursing after observing the nursing care to a family member in a hospital.
- The students expressed their commitment to nursing and their interest in pursuing advanced education in nursing.
- Students are invited to participate in the nursing faculty meetings but with the interference of the pandemic, none have attended.
- Students expressed satisfaction with the clinical experiences. Dr. Webb commented that they often do not want to leave the clinical area when the shift ends.
- When the students were asked to offer advice to pass on to Level I students, they said:
 - Do not get discouraged.
 - Keep an open mind.
 - Get study groups together early and READ.
 - Try to enjoy the program.
 - Do not be afraid to ask for help.
 - Stay strongly motivated.
 - Read a lot.
 - Don't give up.
- Graduates from the VN program quickly find jobs when they complete the program.
- The preliminary NCLEX-PN® examination pass rates for the VN programs for 2021 are 100% (5/5) for the New Braunfels campus and 93.65% (59/63) for the MLK (San Antonio) campus.
- Student files are organized and include necessary documents, including grades, clinical evaluations, and progress reports.

Program of Study:

NEPIS 2020 data for two programs:

Program Data	San Antonio Campus	New Braunfels Campus
Total Enrollment	155	21
Graduates	58 (summer classes* cancelled; no second cohort)	9 (summer classes* cancelled; no second cohort)
Admissions - August	45	0
Admissions - January	39	12
Program Length	12 month	12 month
	Block curriculum, hybrid 560 didactic hours	Block curriculum, hybrid 560 didactic hours

Program Data	San Antonio Campus	New Braunfels Campus
Clinical Hours	Computer – 18 hours Skills lab – 262 hours Simulation – 50 hours Hands-on – 520 hours Total - 880 hours	Computer – 50 hours Skills lab – 254 hours Simulation – 64 hours Hands-on – 512 hours Total – 880 hours
Types of Clinical	5% acute care, 90% long term care, 5% community 64 hrs peds, 48 hrs maternity	5% acute care, 90% long term care, 5% community 64 hrs peds, 48 hrs maternity

*summer classes cancelled due to lack of clinical experiences

The program is delivered in three semesters with a total of 47 semester credit hours. Seven of the 20 courses involve clinical practice with three clinical courses in the last semester. All of the courses in the last two semesters are nursing courses. The arrangement of the curriculum follows a logical pattern with basic knowledge and skills provided in the first semester. The clinical evaluation tools are based on DEC's competencies with objectives that are progressive across the program.

Each of the three levels has a "Level Lead" and each nursing course is assigned a "Course Lead." This approach in management gives assigned responsibilities to faculty members and promotes development of leadership skills among the faculty.

Advisory Committees for the health disciplines participate in decision-making. The nursing programs use the recommendations from their advisory committee for information about current needs in the work settings. An example was a suggestion from the advisory committee to include more instruction and practice in documentation, which was quickly implemented.

After nursing programs suddenly had to convert to online teaching/learning strategies and using virtual simulation in Spring 2020, most are moving the curriculum to a hybrid model. St. Philip's will likely continue with a hybrid presentation, though they recognize the value of face-to-face education. Where programs are choosing to make the hybrid model permanent, a major curriculum change proposal will be required for Board Staff approval.

Clinical Learning Experiences:

- Hands-on clinical experiences are available for students this fall that allow smaller numbers of students for rotations. Clinical schedules are designed to ensure that all students rotate through clinical settings.
- The students are afforded practice experiences in a variety of clinical settings with diverse populations.
- Spanish-speaking students have the advantage of a second language which is useful in the San Antonio community.
- The Clinical Coordinator and nursing faculty are watchful for new experiences to meet the clinical requirements.
- Agreements with 35 clinical sites including hospitals, rehabilitation centers, pediatric settings, residential care, nursing care and long term care establishments were identified in the document reviewed. Contracts are reviewed on an annual basis for currency.
- In order to assure students' skill level, they are tested in the lab for a set of nursing skills at the beginning of each level.

- The program used virtual simulation experiences during the pandemic and faculty chose to delay the last clinical course for the Summer 2021 semester, which made it necessary for students to attend the clinical course in the Fall with hands-on clinical experiences. Faculty used the summer for enrichment activities with students to keep them engaged in critical thinking and clinical decision-making activities. This innovative approach obviously assisted students' successful outcomes on the NCLEX examination.
- During the virtual visit, the program was reminded by Board Staff to update program documents using the 2021 DEC's by January 2022.

Facilities:

- The nursing department is located in the Center for Health Professions. There are five classrooms available for nursing classes, skills laboratories, four high-fidelity simulation laboratories with debriefing rooms, and a virtual hospital setting.
- The simulation labs at New Braunfels are receiving new simulation equipment to allow students to have the same simulation experiences at both sites.
- St. Philip's College is in the process of achieving accreditation for the simulation lab, and several nursing faculty are trained and certified.
- The well-equipped Center is available for use by students in the other health disciplines and opportunities are available for interdisciplinary clinical experiences.
- The Program Director and faculty have private offices.

Total Program Evaluation:

- The program has an organized total program evaluation plan that includes all required elements in Rule 214.13.

Pros and Cons of Program Review:

Strengths:

- St. Philip's College provides resources, facilities, and an organizational structure that facilitate success in the nursing programs.
- Quality Indicators (Spector et. al., 2020) were identified during the review of documents and virtual visit interview as indicated below:

Quality Indicators Recognized:

- *Administrative support.* It is evident that St. Philip's College provides support and resources for a successful program. Dr. Loston described many recent grants and funds received that greatly added to resources for the college and opportunities for faculty.
- *Consistent leadership in the nursing program:* Though Ms. Sterling has not been in the Program Director role for a long time, she has been a faculty member at St. Philip's College since 2010 and is very familiar with the program. The support she has from the Chair and Dean is evident.
- *Consistent full-time faculty.* Faculty who participated in the interview had been faculty members at St. Philip's many years with the earliest hire time mentioned as 1987. Faculty tend to begin with St. Philip's as adjunct, join the full time faculty, and remain employees. They do have opportunity to advance in rank.

- *Faculty with current clinical competence:* Faculty possess years of nursing skills in various specialties and most supervise the students in their clinical practice.
- *Evidence-based curriculum that emphasizes critical thinking and clinical reasoning skills:* The program has already instituted teaching strategies to assist the students in their decision-making skills in patient care.
- *Clinical experiences with actual patients that prepare students for the reality of clinical practice:* Conversations with students and faculty confirm this finding.
- *Opportunities for a variety of clinical experiences with diverse populations:* St. Philip's' long standing presence in the community has resulted in strong relationships with clinical facilities.
- *Quality simulation:* New equipment has been added to the lab during the last year to ensure realistic experiences. A number of nursing faculty are already certified in simulation and there are plans to increase this number. The simulation lab is in candidacy for accreditation.
- *A systematic process to address and remediate student practice errors:* Staff are provided to assist students in remediation and assistance in learning.
- *Consistent NCLEX pass rates above the requirement:* See table presenting the past five years of pass rates.
- *Faculty are able to role model professional behaviors:* Students exhibit the caring demeanor when they discuss their patients that is seen in the faculty.
- *Administrative support for ongoing faculty development:* A partnership with San Antonio College offers development through workshops. St. Philip's College supports faculty attendance at the Texas Association of Vocational Nurse Educators.
- *Ongoing systematic evaluation of the nursing program:* An example of how faculty use evaluation data for program improvement was described by faculty: During the pandemic, faculty listened to students and repeatedly heard how much they want to be in face-to-face classes, labs, and clinical practice. Faculty persisted in getting permissions for students to be back in the classroom, labs, and patient care using social distancing, protection, and limited exposures. The faculty are very sensitive to student needs.
- *Comprehensive student support services:* Besides the student assistance programs in the nursing department, a wide range of student services are provided by the community college.

Concerns:

- The concerns are the same ones common to most VN programs: the drop in enrollments, maintaining hands-on clinical practice in health care settings, and the growing faculty shortage.

Staff Recommendation:

Move to accept the report of the findings of the virtual survey visit to the St. Philip's Vocational Nursing Education Programs in San Antonio and New Braunfels, Texas, as indicated in the attached letter (Attachment #1).

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 Regulation*, 11(2), S1-S64.

Draft Letter

Ivette Sterling, MSN Ed., RN-BC
Program Director
Vocational Nursing Education Programs
St. Philip's College
San Antonio, Texas
New Braunfels, Texas

Dear Ms. Sterling:

At the October 21, 2021 Board meeting, members of the Texas Board of Nursing considered the findings from the virtual survey visit conducted on September 28 and September 29, 2021, for the Vocational Nursing Education Programs in San Antonio and New Braunfels, Texas. It was the decision of the Board to accept the survey visit report and to thank St. Philip's College for assisting and participating in the virtual survey visit.

If you have any questions, or if we may offer assistance, please contact Board Staff at Janice.hooper@bon.texas.gov or (512) 305-6814.

Sincerely,

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

Copy: Dr. Adena Williams Loston, President
Dr. Rhonda Webb, DNP, MSN Ed, RN, Nursing Education Chairperson
Jessica Cooper, MS Dean of Academic Success for Health and Biosciences and Public
Service
Randall Dawson, MS Vice President of Academic Success
Annette Bailey, BSN, RN, Program Coordinator for New Braunfels