

**Report of Findings from a Virtual Survey Visit
Central Texas College in Killeen, Texas
Vocational Nursing Education Program**

Summary of Request:

Consider the report of the August 1-3, 2022, virtual focused survey visit to the Central Texas College (CTC) in Killeen, Texas, Vocational Nursing (VN) Education Program.

Historical Perspective:

- CTC VN program has been in operation since 1976.
- The VN Program has graduated 1,735 students since its beginning.
- Their web site is <https://www.ctcd.edu/academics/instructional-departments/nursing/>
- Susan Ramnarine-Singh, EdD, MSN, RN, MAJ/ANC(R), has served as Program Director for the VN and Associate Degree Nursing (ADN) Education Programs. since June 1, 2018.
- CTC is accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) holds a Certificate of Authorization from The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board to offer the vocational nursing certificate.
- The last regular Board survey visit was conducted in November 2017.
- The NCLEX-PN® examination pass rates for the past five years are included in the table below:

NCLEX Examination Year	BON Approval Status	NCLEX-VN® Examination Pass Rate	Number of First Time Candidates (Passed/Total)
2021	Full with Warning	78.79%	26/33
2020	Full	74.42%	32/43
2019	Full	83.72%	36/43
2018	Full	83.33%	20/24
2017	Full	100%	41/41

- CTC submitted a Self-Study Report to the Board in July, 2021 reflecting on the 2020 NCLEX pass rate. Factors identified as causative factors for the drop in the pass rate included: inadequate admission criteria, students' failure to carry out reading assignments, grade inflation, inconsistent interrater-reliability among the faculty, lack of preparation of students for the NCLEX examination, impact of COVID restrictions in nursing education, and ongoing faculty turnover.
- The previous regular face-to-face survey visit to CTC VN Program was conducted in November 2017 by Education Consultants, Janice Hooper and Virginia Ayars.
- The August 1-3, 2022, visit was conducted as a focus visit in response to the Board Order of April 20, 2022, when the approval status for the VN program was changed to Full

Approval with Warning. The visit focused on the current VN program and processes in place for quality improvement.

- The preliminary 2022 NCLEX-PN® examination pass rates stands at 85.29% and there are no known candidates for the exam for the remainder of the year.

Parties participating in the survey:

Program Director:

- Susan Ramnarine-Singh, EdD, MSN, RN, MAJ/ANC(R)

Education Consultants:

- Janice I. Hooper, PhD, RN, FRE, CNE, FAAN, ANEF
- Lisa Donnelly, DNP, MA, RN

Administration:

- Tammy Samarripa, LP, BA, MPH, Chair, DHS
- Lori Forsyth, DNP, RN, Assistant Chair/Professor, DHS

Faculty:

- Lamén Ramirez, BSN, RN

Adjunct Faculty:

- Cassy Cathell, RN – assists Ms. Ramirez with traditional day students

Evening Weekend Faculty:

- Christopher Brown, BSN, RN
- Kelly Smith, BSN, RN

One Student

Documents provided by CTC and reviewed by the Education Consultants included:

- Introductory Materials with an overview of the program
- Curriculum Plan, Philosophy, Program Objectives
- Syllabi
- Clinical Evaluation Tools
- Systematic Program Evaluation Plan with Current Data
- Director and Faculty Job Descriptions
- Faculty Meeting Minutes
- Student Handbook
- Faculty Handbook

Consultants also reviewed the data on the 2021 NEPIS and CANEP.

Schedule for the Survey Visit:

Monday, August 1, 2022: Conference between Susan Ramnarine-Singh, Janice I. Hooper, and Lisa Donnelly

Tuesday, August 2, 2022:

9:00 a.m.: Meeting with College Administration, Program Director, and Education Consultants

10:15 a.m.: Meeting between Program Director and Education Consultants

11:15 a.m.: Meeting with Students

1:00 p.m.: Meeting with Faculty

Wednesday, August 3, 2022:

9:00 a.m.: Pre-Exit Visit between Program Director and Education Consultants

10:00 a.m.: Exit Interview between Program Representatives and Education Consultants

Findings from Survey Visit:

Administration:

- Tammy Samarripa, Chair of the Department of Health Sciences, and Lori Forsyth, Assistant Chair and Professor of the Department of Health Sciences, met with the Education Consultants and the Program Director.
- The Department has seats for 500 students in various disciplines: EMT/EMT-P; Massage Therapy, Medical Technology, Histotechnology; Mental Health, and Vocational and Professional Nursing.
- The Health Science programs work closely together to engage all students in interdisciplinary practice in classes and in emergency training for a community disaster.
- The administration at CTC is very supportive of the nursing programs. The Program Director stated that the Department Chair and Assistant Chair are both accessible and support many activities (faculty development, provision of resources, travel expenses, recruitment of faculty, and improving faculty salaries).
- The Chair commented that the nursing programs are the “gem of the college”.
- When asked the major goals for improvement of the college, the Chair listed the following goals:
 - “growing the programs” in the department following the experience of COVID
 - Construction on campus
 - Changes in faculty contracts; retention bonuses
 - Renovations including improvements in technology and classrooms
- Administration was very complimentary of the Program Director’s leadership, organization, foresight in planning, and attention to details.

Faculty:

- The Faculty Handbook provides information for both ADN and VN faculty and includes requirements for the rules.
- One of the crises during the pandemic was the loss of faculty through resignations and retirements. The result was that the Program Director stepped in to deliver lectures and carry on during the pandemic emergency.
- A decision was made to not enroll new students for the Fall 2021 admission to the traditional day class and until the faculty shortage was addressed.
- Recruiting and retaining nursing faculty has been a challenge for the VN program. Faculty salaries seem to be the issue.
- A shared Clinical Coordinator for the programs in the Department of Health Sciences identifies health care settings appropriate for students in the health professions. This relieves the program director and faculty from the work of finding clinical settings and establishing agreements.
- During the interview with faculty, all faculty indicated that new faculty orientation is well-planned and executed. The part-time faculty teaching in the Weekend/Evening program also work as registered nurses in various practice settings. They expressed their satisfaction with the educator roles at CTC, and several spoke of continuing to teach, especially when they retire from the practice arena.
- They spoke of their using a number of teaching strategies that have promoted student learning with the limitations of COVID, such as concept mapping and SBAR. They rated the simulation labs for students as valuable assets in preparing the students for hands-on care of actual patients. Their descriptions of carrying on during COVID was very positive.
- Several of the faculty have a tenure at CTC of two to three years, and one began her employment this summer.
- Faculty are supported by resources for faculty development.
- The Department of Health Sciences provides a 14-page new employee checklist to guide in onboarding and offer valuable information to the new hire.

Program of Study:

- There are three tracks in the VN program:
 - a traditional (generic) day track offered with a mix of face-to-face and online courses with weekday courses;
 - a part-time weekend/evening tract that allows a working student to complete the program in with one additional semester; and
 - a 68W Army Medic Military Transition track for skilled healthcare provider with battlefield emergency and limited primary care training.

All three tracks are conducted at the Killeen campus, each with 42 credit hours leading to a certificate.

- Complications related to COVID have interfered with students' education and timely completion.
- Currently the enrollment in each track is:

Evening/Weekend program: 16 students

Day program: 8 repeating students

Military Track: No students have enrolled since the program began.

- Three of the faculty in the VN and ADN programs were graduates from CTC.
- In Spring 2022 the Program Director and faculty redesigned a curriculum plan to shorten the program length from 12 months to nine months to be in line with other VN programs and to facilitate hiring of new faculty.
- The nursing programs follow the Department of Health Sciences Mission Statement to promote excellence in healthcare education to a diverse student population through health care programs enriched with support for student success and employability.
- The programs are built on the *Differentiated Essential Competencies* throughout the courses and in the Clinical Evaluation Tools.
- The Program Director and faculty have designed a revised VN curriculum for 43 credits over a nine-month time. This may be more attractive to both students and faculty. It has been approved by CTC and the BON staff will provide an official approval letter.

Students

- No students were admitted to the traditional day track for Fall 2021 due to the faculty shortage. CTC does not plan to admit a traditional day cohort in Fall 2022 while they readjust to the changes that have ensued during the pandemic.
- The only students presently in the traditional day track are eight repeating students who had previously failed.
- In Spring 2022, 16 students were admitted to the weekend/evening track who will graduate in Spring 2023.
- Only one of the 16 students in the weekend/evening program was available to meet with the Education Consultants, but she was able to respond to the questions with rich explanations of the program. Becoming a nurse had been a dream of hers and being accepted at CTC made that dream a reality. She expressed her positive experiences at CTC and finds the education and clinical experiences very valuable.
- The clinical experiences at Advent Health and the VA Hospital provide an opportunity to work with a variety of patients.
- The weekend/evening students all have day jobs and the scheduling of weekend/evening classes and clinicals make it possible for them to be enrolled in the program.
- This evening/weekend track seems to attract adult learners seeking an education that gives them new possibilities for a career in nursing.
- Following graduation, most of the graduates are employed by long term care facilities, clinics, or acute care settings.

- The Student Handbook serves both students in the VN and ADN programs and includes an explanation about the DEC's and provides eligibility information.

Clinical Learning Experiences:

- The program provides clinical practice learning experiences in settings that offer a wide variety of patients and learning opportunities.
- Several facilities used for the VN program include AdventHealth Central Texas and Cornerstone Rehab Hospital.
- CTC has an active Advisory Committee made up of representatives from health care facilities in the area. The programs provide updates to the committee and seek their input, especially areas where the programs can provide didactic and clinical content needed for current nursing practice.

Total Program Evaluation:

- The Vocational Nursing Systematic Program Evaluation Plan was provided and includes data and decision-making for 2022.

Pros: Quality Indicators Recognized: (Spector et al., 2020).

- The CTC administration is very supportive of the nursing programs as evidenced by the resources available for faculty development and teaching materials.
- There is consistent leadership for the nursing programs through a Program Director who has served as Director since 2018 and as faculty since 2006.
- Faculty teaching clinical courses demonstrate current clinical competence.
- The curriculum is evidence-based and emphasizes clinical reasoning skills.
- The curriculum also emphasizes quality and safety standards for patient care (QSEN, DEC's).
- The program provides valuable clinical experiences with actual patients and prepares students for the reality of clinical practice.
- There are significant opportunities for a variety of clinical experiences with diverse populations.
- Quality simulation is used to augment clinical experiences.
- Admission criteria that emphasize a background in the sciences.
- There is collaboration between education and practice when planning for clinical experiences.
- Faculty are able to role model professional behaviors.
- There is administrative support for ongoing faculty development.
- An ongoing systematic evaluation plan is being used.
- Comprehensive student support services are available.

Cons with a Twist:

- The program was placed on Full with Warning Approval Status in 2022, but the predicted pass rate for 2022 is above 85%.

- The program has experienced faculty shortage and faculty turnover, but is addressing those issues and will soon be fully staffed. Faculty salaries have been a deterrent in hiring new faculty and the administration is encouraged to consider this fact in planning ahead.

Staff Recommendation:

Move to accept the report of the August 1-3, 2022, focused virtual survey visit to the Central Texas College Vocational Nursing Education Program in Killeen, Texas, with no recommendations and/or requirements as indicated in the attached letter.

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

October 21, 2022

Susan Ramnarine-Singh, EdD, MSN, RN, MAJ/ANC(R), CNOR, Director
Vocational Nursing Education Program
Central Texas College
Department of Nursing & Allied Health
6200 West Central Texas Expressway, Bldg 155
Killeen, Texas 76549

Dear Dr. Ramnarine-Singh:

At the October 20, 2022, meeting, the members of the Texas Board of Nursing (Board) considered the report of the virtual focused survey visit to the Central Texas College Vocational Nursing Education in Killeen, Texas. Board Staff wish to thank the Program Director and CTC Staff in assisting with the virtual meetings for the survey visit.

Based upon the discussion and review of information, it was the decision of the Board to accept the report of the focused virtual survey visited conducted on August 1-3, 2022.

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: Tammy Samarripa, LP, BA, MPH, Chair, DHS
Lori Forsyth, DNP, RN, Assistant Chair/Professor, DHS