

**Consideration of Findings from a Virtual Survey Visit  
Houston Community College in Houston, Texas  
Associate Degree Nursing Education Program**

**Summary of Request:**

Consider the report of the November 14-15, 2022, Board-ordered virtual survey visit to Houston Community College (HCC) Associate Degree Nursing (ADN) Education Program in Houston, Texas.

**Historical Perspective:**

- The HCC ADN program began in 1979 as a department in the Health Careers Division of Houston Community College. It is located at the Coleman College for Health Sciences campus.
- HCC is accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) and holds a Certificate of Authorization from The Texas Higher Education Board to grant degrees.
- HCC Coleman College is located in the Texas Medical Center in Houston along with several BSN programs and renown medical centers, and offers both vocational and associate degree nursing education programs as well as education and training for careers in the health career sciences through 22 additional health science programs.
- The last regular Board survey visit to HCC was conducted in 2015.
- The NCLEX-RN® examination pass rates for the past five years are included in the table below along with the preliminary 2022 pass rate:

<b>NCLEX Examination Year</b>	<b>BON Approval Status</b>	<b>NCLEX-VN® Examination Pass Rate</b>	<b>(Passed/Total)</b>
2022	Preliminary	49.24%	97/197
2021	Full with Warning	56.54%	134/237
2020	Full	77.78%	105/135
2019	Full	88.89%	72/81
2018	Full	93.88%	46/49
2017	Full	84.95%	79.93

- A Self-Study Report submitted in 2021 identified the following factors that may have contributed to the pass rate:
  - Change in the admission process led to a student services approach, with limited faculty input on selection of students.
  - Student grading policies need further expansion to incorporate faculty grading guidelines, clinical faculty input, and test item analysis.
  - An increase in staff and faculty is needed to establish practices and policies of consistent student services to accommodate student enrollment.

- There is a need for an effective team approach for consistency in program planning, new faculty orientation, and testing practices.
- Standardized test results can be used for guidance in determining curriculum and test development.
- The program will be strengthened by seeking nursing accreditation.
- Corrective measures centered around the admission process, grading policies, increasing staff and faculty, and faculty development.
- Dr. Tyrone Sharp has been the ADN Program Director since 2019 and has been a faculty member since 2007.

**November 14-15, 2022 Survey Visit:**

Participants in the survey visit:

Board Staff: Kristin Benton, DNP, RN, Director of Nursing  
 Janice I. Hooper, PhD, RN, Lead Nursing Consultant for Education

HCCS Administration: Dr. Philip Nicotera, MD, President  
 Dr. Jeff Gricar, EdD, Dean  
 Dr. Ramon Villegas, EdD, Director of Compliance

ADN Program Director: Dr. Tyrone Sharp, PhD, RN

ADN Faculty of Record: Dr. Bernadette Pollard  
 Dr. Kimberly Sherard  
 Dr. Rita Callahan  
 Dr. Brenda McDaniel  
 Dr. Sofia John  
 Dr. Jolly Joseph  
 Dr. Susan Thomas  
 Dr. Linda Lackey  
 Dr. Lilian Ofoegbu  
 Dr. Penelope Williams  
 Prof. Tracey Canada  
 Prof. Michelle Kirkpatrick  
 Prof. Lakisha Hadley  
 Prof. Theresa Wooten  
 Dr. Deanna Rix (not present)  
 Dr. Melissa Riley  
 Dr. Lori Evans (not present)

ADN Students 10 students from three levels of the program

Video Presentations Provided: Dr. Bernadette Pollard, PhD, DNP, RN – Lecturer  
 Tour of nursing facilities.

Documents reviewed by Board Staff prior to the visit:

- Curriculum documents: Philosophy, Program Objectives, Program Outcomes
- Syllabi

- Clinical Evaluation Tools
- Total Program Evaluation with 2022-2023 with data
- Faculty Handbook
- Student Handbook
- Self-Study Report 2021
- NEPIS data for 2021 and 2022
- Job Descriptions for director and faculty
- List of clinical courses
- Minutes of Shared Governance Meetings

Board Staff express appreciation to Miroslava Martinez of HCC Staff for her organization of materials and scheduling virtual meetings.

### **Schedule for Virtual Survey Visit:**

#### November 14, 2022

- Board Staff meeting with Program Director
- Board Staff meeting with Administration and Program Director
- Board Staff review of videotaped class lecture by faculty, Bernadette Pollard
- Board Staff review of video tour of Coleman College building and labs
- Board Staff meeting with nursing students
- Board Staff meeting with nursing faculty

#### November 15, 2022

- J. Hooper meeting with Program Director to discuss areas of information
- Board Staff meeting with Program Director and Dr. Linda Dune, recruited educator for faculty development
- Board Staff meeting with Program Director, VN Program Director, and Dr. Linda Dune to preview findings and report for Exit Interview
- Board Staff present exit interview with Administration, Program Director, VN Program Director, Dr. Linda Dune, Nursing Faculty and others invited from HCC

### **Current Status of ADN Program**

The purpose for the survey visit is to discuss current status of program, options, and suggested measures for 2023

- Current approval status: Full with Warning
- Preliminary 2022 Pass Rate on December 31, 2022: 49.24% for 97/197 candidates
- It is likely that the Board will change the approval status to Conditional in April 2023 resulting in restrictions for new admissions for the rest of the year. If the pass rate is 80% or above on December 31, 2023, Board Staff will recommend removing the Conditional Approval at the January 2024 Board Meeting.
- Current enrolled students: 94 (Level 1) + 58 (Level 3) + 94 (Level 4) = 246 total. The 94 Level 4 students will graduate in December 2022. The 58 Level 3 students will graduate in May 2023.
- A January 2023 student admission will be allowed.

**Administration:**

- The team of administrators discussed the programs in the college and the role of the nursing programs in the college.
- Dr. Nicotera stated that the nursing department is the largest of the health science programs at HCC and very important to the college and community. He emphasized the goal for the nursing program is to produce high quality nurses. Dr. Nicotera expressed support for the nursing program.
- Dr. Gricar oversees 22 health science programs totaling an enrollment of 1483 students.
- Dr. Nicotera indicated that he reviews the Mountain Measurement Reports that provide data on HCC students' performance on the NCLEX and finds that the areas for improvement are generalized across the exam.

**Program Director:**

- Dr. Sharp has a long tenure at HCC beginning with his own nursing education as a student at HCC. He has pursued education through advanced degrees to a PhD. He began as a nursing faculty at HCC in 2007. Dr. Sharp responded to questions about the following areas:
- Faculty workload is calculated from contact hours in clinical supervision and didactic instruction with allotment for class preparation, meetings with students, and committee work.
- Faculty develop their own test items for most of the course exams. Standardized exams account for about 10% of course grades. Dr. Dune will assist faculty with skills for writing test items and in item analysis.
- Full-time faculty are provided private offices to facilitate privacy when counseling students and when preparing course materials.
- The Program Director's workload does not include teaching, which allows more time for administrative duties and managing the program.
- Two faculty members have been assigned as an overload assignment to negotiate clinical sites and placements for the students. This is viewed as a positive move toward improving optimal clinical arrangements.

**Faculty:**

- During faculty introductions, Board Staff realized that most of the full-time faculty have long tenures at HCC ranging from two and three years for new faculty an up to 36 years for seasoned faculty at HCC. Board Staff encouraged all faculty to take advantage of faculty development opportunities to incorporate new ideas in nursing education.
- Faculty expressed a desire for more faculty since there are several vacancies and they also echoed the same desire as did students: for more hands-on CLINICAL practice. Board Staff reviewed the Education Guideline for Academic-Practice Partnerships with faculty as one suggestion for providing more clinical time for students.
- Faculty are aware of the necessity to offer more acceptable teaching strategies to today's students and are using some new teaching methods. Faculty are also available to students at off-times to help them with course content.

- Faculty also entertained a discussion about simulation – how much and how well it meets clinical needs.
- Board Staff suggested that the Faculty Job Description undergo review to add responsibilities outlined in Rule 215.7(a-b) related to Faculty.
- Faculty numbers reported in the 2021 NEPIS were as follows:
  - Budgeted faculty positions: 59
  - Employed faculty: 18 full time; 29 part time
  - Vacancies: 12 positions

**Students:**

A group of 10 students from the different levels of the program met with Board Staff to provide the following information:

- Students offered their personal reasons for entering nursing that included experiences with a caring and supportive nurse who influenced their lives; dealing with serious life events which led them to a career of service; having a family member who is a nurse; and seeking a second career that will make a difference in people's lives. The group of students were mature with life experiences that add value to their nursing education. Board Staff noted from program data that the student population at HCC is mostly adults in the 20 to 50 year age range.
- Students described the faculty as caring, giving, and willing to spend time with students to ensure learning. They stated that faculty teach critical thinking, show passion about their teaching, and continuously update their own knowledge.
- Students are willing to help each other and discussed a student-helping-student approach that is being used where upper-level students serve in a mentoring role with beginning students.
- Students also appreciate the “voice-over” approach for the course lectures which allows them to listen to a class session multiple times.
- When asked for suggestions to improve the program, they agreed they would really like more CLINICAL with actual patients. Establishing clinical placements has been difficult since the pandemic began, but students recognize the value in the experience.
- Students discussed some of their current clinical experiences with patients.
- Students indicated this initial nursing education is only the beginning of their career path.
- The 2021 NEPIS data indicates that 246 students were admitted during the 2021 academic year and 240 graduated. The two admission times are in January and August.

Board Staff commend the program for their recent affiliation with the National Student Nursing Association by establishing a chapter on campus. Students and faculty alike are very pleased about this decision.

**Program of Study:**

- The curriculum is based upon a block format. The same basic curriculum is afforded to the transition students with allowances for their previous education.
- The Compliance Audit report for 2021 states the program is in compliance with Board rules.

**Clinical Learning Experiences:**

- The program provides clinical practice in a variety of acute care settings (75% of hands-on practice) and long-term care (25% of hands-on practice).
- The breakdown of clinical hours is 32 hour for computer activities, 48 hours in nursing skills laboratories, 360 hours in hands-on care, and 360 hours in simulation experiences.

**Facilities, Resources, and Services:**

- The nursing programs are housed in a new, modern facility in the Houston Medical Center, surrounded by programs and hospital specialties.
- HCCS provided a full range of student services to all the students in health care fields.

**Records and Reports:**

- HCCS follows the policies of the college for records retention and security of data.

**Comments During the Exit Interview:**

Board Staff made the following suggestions to the administration, director, and faculty during the exit interview to offer an overview of the findings:

**Suggestions for the ADN Program in the Exit Interview:**

- Focus on the education and success of students who will test for the 2023 pass rate.
- Identify “outliers,” previous graduates who may not have tested before, and provide reviews to aid in their preparation.
- Work on team building within the ADN faculty and staff (encouraging communication, trust, and positive work together).
- Involve nursing faculty in decision-making and committee work.
- Raise program standards. Use strategies to promote agreement among faculty. Consistently follow program policies.
- Recognize at-risk students early – during the first level and offer help or suggest another option.
- Continue with corrective measures outlined in the 2021 Self-Study Report as significant progress has been made in these areas.
- Promote occasional inclusion of students from other health care programs to join simulation scenarios for practice in interdisciplinary activities.
- Discuss the possibility of suggesting other health care programs to nursing students who would be better served with another education pathway.

- Encourage faculty development activities for all faculty to expand their horizons and stimulate new ideas for the program.
- As a part of the future plans to update the curriculum, work on simplification of the syllabi and clinical evaluation tools.
- Contact the education consultants at the Board for questions and assistance.

Board Staff also reviewed the Quality Indicators during the exit interview and pointed out ones that they demonstrate. Programs are interested in the indicators as program goals for improving their programs.

Following the visit and in response to the survey findings, the Program Director submitted the following information:

**Additional Information** (in italics) **Provided by the Program Director following the visit:**

*Dr. Tyrone P. Sharp, PhD, RN was appointed by HCC Coleman College Leadership on 8/1/2019. Dr. Sharp was employed by HCC as a nursing instructor from 6/2007-7/2019. Dr. Sharp graduated from HCC with a certificate of completion in Vocational Nursing in 1974.*

*From 2007 to 2019 the ADN program has been under the leadership of six previous program directors and a Dean of Nursing.*

*From 2012 to 2022 the HCC ADN nursing program has been in compliance with the Texas Board of Nursing 80% NCLEX-RN passage requirements for 5 reporting periods and out of compliance for 5 reporting periods.*

*Frequent changes in program leadership and the COVID-19 pandemic have each contributed substantially to the current out of compliance NCLEX pass rate of the HCC ADN program.*

*The following measures have been implemented under the leadership of Dr. Sharp to assure future achievement of the required 80% NCLEX-RN pass rate for the 2023 reporting period:*

*1. The ADN nursing is now structured under a Shared Governance Model. This model places the responsibility of nursing student education under the leadership of the program director and the faculty to implement the TBON Rules relating to ADN nursing programs.*

*2. The ADN program now requires each nursing student to maintain a grade of "B" in each nursing course. The ADN program requires a "B" or better grade in each nursing course. Whereas, a grade of "C" or better is required for HCC.*

*3a. The ADN program now requires that each potential nursing student achieve a score of 85 or better on the following sections of the HESI A2 admissions test:*

- (1) Reading comprehension*
- (2) Vocabulary and general knowledge*
- (3) Anatomy and Physiology*
- (4) Grammar*

*3b. The ADN program now requires that each potential nursing student complete the following sections of the HESI A2 admissions test:*

- (1) Personality assessment*
- (2) Learning style assessment*
- (3) Biology test score*
- (4) Chemistry test score*

*3c. The ADN program now requires that each potential nursing student take the HESI A2 test in-person.*

*3d. The program will not admit applicants who have evidenced taking the HESI A2 examination more than twice each year.*

*3e. The ADN program only accepts HESI A2 admissions test scores administered at the HCC Coleman College Testing Center*

*4a. The ADN program now requires that each new full-time faculty and adjunct faculty complete the TBON training module before the 120th day of employment.*

*4b. The ADN program now requires that the Faculty Development Standards Committee Chair and Co-Chair facilitate mentoring for each new full-time faculty member to enhance teaching effectiveness.*

*5. The ADN program now requires that each full-time faculty provide in-person remediation for each nursing student scoring less than 80% on each nursing examination in each nursing course.*

*6. The ADN program now employs a nursing Counselor to address the myriad of issues and concerns that may impede student success among enrolled nursing students.*

*7. The ADN program has now restructured testing standards in each nursing course. Each course requires three unit examinations, a comprehensive final examination and a national benchmark examination.*

*8. The ADN program has now assigned two qualified nursing faculty and an adjunct faculty to seek, plan, and schedule all clinical placements for each nursing student.*

*9. The ADN program has now assigned two qualified nursing faculty and an adjunct faculty to seek, plan and provide clinical simulation offerings for each nursing student.*

*10. The ADN program has hired three new full-time nursing faculty to start January 2023.*

*11. The ADN program now meets weekly to review student progress in each semester nursing course and staffing courses with support staff to resolve issues that do not promote course program.*

*12. The ADN program now meets weekly to address the Total Program Evaluation Plan developed in response to the current program self-study report.*

*13. The ADN program has hired a Program Office Manager to provide administrative support for the program director and program faculty.*



*14. The ADN program is interviewing a newly created Nursing Administrative Coordinator position to develop processes and systems to improve nursing student services and faculty services. Position to be filled by February 2023.*

*15. Curriculum mapping has been initiated and completed and is being monitored monthly.*

*16. Monthly Test writing faculty development will be provided and required for all lecturing faculty effective 2/1/23 for the next 12 months.*

Board Staff have considered information in the program documents, NCLEX reports, Self-Study Report, and findings from the survey visit in the following recommendation:

**Board Staff Recommendation:**

Move to accept the findings in the Virtual Survey Report to Houston Community College Associate Degree Nursing Education Program in Houston, Texas, conducted on November 14-15, 2022.

Draft Letter

January 20, 2023

Tyrone P. Sharp, PhD, RN  
Program Director, Associate Degree Nursing Education Program  
Houston Community College  
1900 Pressler Drive, Suite 344  
Houston, Texas 77030

Dear Dr. Sharp :

At the January 19, 2023, meeting, the members of the Texas Board of Nursing (Board) considered the report of the virtual focused survey visit to Houston Community College Associate Degree Nursing Education in Houston, Texas. Board Staff wish to thank the Program Director and Houston Community College 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 November 14-15, 2022.

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

Sincerely,

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

Copy: Dr. Philip Nicotera, MD, President  
Dr. Jeff Gricar, EdD, Dean  
Dr. Ramon Villegas, EdD, Director of Compliance