

**REPORT OF SURVEY VISIT
 COMPUTER CAREER CENTER IN EL PASO, TEXAS
 VOCATIONAL NURSING EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM**

SUMMARY OF REQUEST:

Consider the report of the focused survey visit on March 25-26, 2010 to Computer Career Center Vocational Nursing Educational Program in El Paso, Texas related to complaints and reports received by Board staff.

HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE:

Year	BON Approval Status	NCLEX-PN® Pass Rate	Number of First-Time Candidates (Passed/Total)
2009	Full	86.05%	37/43
2008	Full	88.57%	31/35
2007	Full approval at April 2007 Board Meeting	84.21%	16/19
2006	Initial	95.24%	20/21
2005	Initial	70.00%	14/20

- After obtaining Initial approval at the July 2004 Board meeting, Computer Career Center started the vocational nursing educational program in October 2004 with twenty-four (24) students.
- With an initial NCLEX-PN Pass Rate of 70% in 2005 for the initial student cohort, the program submitted a Self-Study Report in March 2006.
- Board staff conducted a focused survey visit to the program in May 2008, subsequent to a relocation of the program from the site of initial approval in 2004. Six (6) program directors had been in place since the time of initial approval. A recommendation was made to revise and implement changes in program grading policy before the student is admitted into the program. Requirements were issued for: 1) program director to attend the next scheduled orientation session at the Board offices in Austin, Texas; and 2) school administration and directors were strongly urged to implement a plan/remodeling for adequate seating accommodations for students in the classroom, and further, remodeling plan of the building should be considered a priority.
- An undated response to the above requirements located in Board files indicates the following:
 - 1) Both the director (Shupe) and coordinator (Whitaker) completed the online orientation. The former director (Shupe) left to direct the New Mexico-based program and coordinator (Whitaker) assumed the role of director of the El Paso program, subsequently attending the Board face-to-face orientation in Spring 2009.
 - 2) Long tables with chairs in the existing classroom were replaced by individual student desks in the classroom, as evidenced by photos submitted with the written response. **NOTE:** Current classrooms now include the large space included in the photos above, along with three (3) smaller classrooms which use long tables and chairs for seating.

- Appointment of Sarah E. Whitaker, DNS, RN as Director was approved February 2, 2009.
- The program submitted notification of a planned extension campus in Lubbock, Texas, with Board staff acknowledgment of that notice March 16, 2009.
- A proposed minor curriculum change initially submitted December 4, 2008 resulted in significant two-way correspondence and review, ultimately approved as a major curriculum change in July 2009. The change was to move from a model with four (4) 12-week terms to a model with four (4) 15-week terms. Implementation of this model is still pending with anticipated start date of July 2010—the anticipated start of the next Level I student cohort.
- Email communication on March 11, 2010 from Alan Clay, COO of Education Futures Group, the owner of Computer Career Center, indicated that Dr. Whitaker was no longer director of the VN educational program.
- A student complaint was issued to the BON webmaster on Friday, March 12 related to lack of faculty in classroom and clinical settings, lack of access to skills labs, and a requirement to do four (4) weeks of “in-house clinicals” without lab simulation. The student expressed concern related to program costs and the perceived lack of teachers, supplies, resources, no one to turn to, and concern that graduating students were not receiving the education expected. Board staff was unable to obtain further detail or explanation by e-mail response or by invited phone conversations.
- On March 12, Mr. Clay left voice mail and requested assistance with a question related to simulated lab time. Subsequent follow-up indicated “simulation” had been implemented during the January - March 2010 program term.
- Growing concerns about the student complaint and administration’s indication of use of “simulation” prompted an immediate focused survey visit to the program.
- Enrollment as of March 19, 2010 (nearing end of the current academic term) was four (4) cohorts of students as follow:
 - a. Level I with thirty-six (36) students;
 - b. Level II with thirty-two (32) students;
 - c. Level III with twenty-nine (29) students; and
 - d. Level IV with twenty-one (21) students.
- The current academic term was concluded with final exams occurring on Thursday and Friday, March 25-26, 2010.
- Prior plans to start a new Level I cohort with the next academic term on April 5, 2010 were abandoned prior to the focused survey visit. The program is proceeding with Levels II, III, and IV only during the academic term starting in April 2010. Administration anticipates starting the next Level I cohort in the subsequent academic term (July 2010), with expected initial implementation of the revised 15-week curriculum plan model for Level I students.
- A focused survey visit was conducted by Board staff on March 25-26, 2010. The purpose of the visit was to gather facts related to the student complaints and the administration report of use of simulation to determine if emergent action was needed related to NCLEX-PN® testing eligibility for Level IV students. Further, the purpose of the visit was to gather information to present to the Board at the April 2010 quarterly meeting in order to discuss the approval status of Computer Career Center.

SURVEY VISIT FINDINGS:

- To avoid redundancy, please see Attachment #1.

PROS AND CONS:Pros:

- The program has met the Board's NCLEX-PN® pass rate requirement since 2006.

Cons:

- The newly appointed Interim Director has limited prelicensure vocational nursing education experience, having taught clinical content only at the program during the past 3-month academic term.
- The program has taken liberties in meeting clinical objectives.
- Faculty have not been prepared for clinical simulation and do not have policies, procedures, or resources for the use of simulation in clinical learning experiences.
- Faculty report they do not receive adequate orientation to the program.
- Faculty report that faculty meetings have not been held on a regular basis and they do not have ongoing committees to carry out the functions of the program.
- Physical resources are inadequate in areas of: skills/simulation lab and equipment; faculty offices, workspaces, and conference rooms; and learning environment.
- Implementation of the program of study is not based on sound educational principles and does not demonstrate use of learning objectives or appropriate measures of student progress and success.

BACKGROUND FOR RECOMMENDATION:

Rule 214.4(q)(3) sets forth the parameters of full approval with warning status as follows:

(3) Full approval with warning is issued by the Board to a vocational nursing educational program that is not meeting legal and educational requirements

(A) A program issued a warning will receive written notice from the Board of the warning.

(B) The program is given a list of the deficiencies and a specified time in which to correct the deficiencies.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Move to accept the survey visit report, change the approval status of the Computer Career Center in El Paso, Texas Vocational Nursing Educational Program from full approval to full approval with warning and issue the commendation, recommendations, and requirements in the attached letter (Attachment #2).

**SURVEY VISIT
SUMMARY REPORT**

NAME OF NURSING PROGRAM: Computer Career Center Vocational Nursing Educational Program

NURSING PROGRAM DIRECTOR: Constance Howard, BSN, MA, RN, Interim Director submitted for BON approval on March 29, 2010

REASON FOR SURVEY VISIT: To conduct a focused survey visit subsequent to student complaints and program administration report of use of simulation to determine if emergent action was needed related to NCLEX-PN® testing eligibility for Level IV students. Further, the purpose of the visit was to gather information to present to the Board at the April 2010 quarterly meeting in order to discuss the approval status of Computer Career Center.

DATE(S) OF SURVEY VISIT: March 25-26, 2010

SURVEY VISITOR(S): Paul R. Waller, PhD, RN and Robin Caldwell, PhD, RN, CLNC

TEXAS BOARD OF NURSING (BON) APPROVAL STATUS: Full

DATE OF LAST BON SURVEY VISIT: May 5, 2008

NAME OF ACCREDITING AGENCIES: Licensed by the Texas Workforce Commission.

ACTIVITIES DURING SURVEY VISIT:

Board staff:

- met with the school administration—Campus Director and Corporate Director of Education;
- met with the newly-appointed Interim Director;
- met with nursing faculty;
- met with nursing students from all academic levels (I-IV);
- reviewed records and documents; and
- conducted a survey conference with the School Administrators and the Interim Director.

Prior to the survey visit, board staff reviewed in-house file documents including 2006 Self-Study Report, the 2009 NEPIS, and the 2009 CANEP.

SURVEY VISIT FINDINGS:

Areas of concern revealed during the March 25-26, 2010 focused survey visit include:

Clinical:

- Given staffing issues, “in-house clinicals” were implemented in lieu of direct patient care clinical experiences during the December 2009 to March 2010 term. Rather than attending clinical learning experiences in contracted clinical affiliate agencies, students were required to report to the school campus for in-house computer-assisted and case study exercises.

- Level III and Level IV students in the 4-level program participated in four (4) weeks of “in-house clinicals” (Medical/Surgical content in both levels) during the 12-week term. During each of those four (4) weeks, students were assigned to attend two (2) 12-hour in-house sessions (6:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.), for a total of ninety-six (96) hours of “in-house clinicals.” (NOTE: This 96 hours was one-half [½] of the time allocated to Med/Surg clinical experiences in each of Level III and Level IV. Similarly, it was one-third [1/3] of the time allocated to all clinical experiences in the academic term.) Some students reportedly skipped portions of these in-house sessions by using at least some of the twenty-six (26) hours of absentee time allowed in each academic term.
- For “in-house clinicals,” there were no objectives developed specific to the learning experiences, and objectives from clinical courses were reportedly used. Clinical evaluation tools intended for hospital- and other health care agency-based direct patient care situations were reportedly used, but completed examples were not provided. Evaluation was reportedly allocated as: 80% based on clinical evaluation tool; 10% on homework, including a pathophysiology flowsheet and a care plan; and 10% on dosage calculations.

Faculty:

- Faculty were not trained in simulation design or use prior to implementing “in-house clinicals.” Computer-assisted instruction software packages and books were ordered. Actual final implementation of instructional strategies was vaguely explained in very general terms and was difficult to detail. Available resources do not support a simulation environment or experiences.
- “In-house clinicals” were generally supervised by the program Director and lead instructor, with occasional assistance by other faculty.
- Faculty orientation reportedly consisted of a packet of materials presented to new hires. Faculty reported little to no orientation or training, and no documentation of orientation was present in faculty files.
- Faculty reported that faculty meetings were held on a consistent periodic basis until approximately 4-6 months ago, at which time assignments prevented being able to continue. (No faculty meeting minutes were requested or reviewed, given time constraints during the visit.) Similarly, previous (approximately 2 years ago) faculty committees, which included student representatives, are no longer active.
- Interviews with faculty indicated that for the most part, they lack understanding of sound educational principles and teaching methods. Faculty orientation and faculty development are not adequately provided by administration.
- Faculty were unable to identify clearly defined program/course objectives and outcomes or methods to ensure inter-rater reliability when evaluating students’ performance in the skills lab or clinical setting. There was a lack of formal evaluation tools and grading criteria. Faculty stated that they work as a team by talking informally among themselves in the absence of faculty meetings.
- Faculty understanding of the program curriculum was very fragmented. Faculty were not clear what was taught on the different levels or how students were evaluated.

Students:

- Students commended the current faculty for their efforts to provide sound educational experiences.
- Student concerns included:
 - Four (4) faculty hired to replace four (4) departing faculty were seemingly hired very quickly when a single faculty member seemingly could not be found previously to meet the clinical staffing need that resulted in the “in-house clinicals” model

- Concern that training of these new hires may be inadequate
- Lack of communication from upper administration, nursing administration, and faculty, especially related to schedules of classes and clinicals
- Lack of responsiveness of upper administration and nursing administration to expressed concerns, including concerns about use of “in-house clinicals” in lieu of direct patient care clinical experiences
- Time management issues of faculty, with faculty arriving late to class and clinical experiences
- Students might be two (2) weeks into an academic term before textbooks were distributed
- Inconsistent presentation of information related to the requirement of ATI testing—some students seemingly felt well-informed while others did not
- Student evaluation of classes, faculty, and clinical experiences is rare
- Lack of equipment in skills lab
- Lack of structure and clear, consistent communication regarding course and program objectives
- Lack of accessibility to skills lab to Level II, III, and IV students
- A sense that admission criteria were not applied consistently, with some students admitted who reported to peers that they scored below stated criterion levels
- Reports of students admitted with criminal histories who were told, “Don’t worry. You can do Declaratory Order process later.”

Physical Resources:

- The skills labs are not adequate to meet the needs of the program in regards to size, technology, equipment, faculty availability for supervision, and accessibility to students. There were 130 students enrolled in the VN program as of January 1, 2010. The skills lab are conducted in two small rooms, each room having two (2) beds and two (2) mannequins. The rooms are sparse and do not simulate a hospital environment (no wall mounted blood pressure equipment, oxygen or suction, over-bed tables, night stands, room dividers, or curtains). The supply room was noted to be stocked with seemingly ample consumable supplies (e.g., dressing supplies, foley catheter and trach care kits), however, there was a lack of basic equipment such as medication cart, linen cart, crash cart, wheel chairs, crutches, walkers, and trapeze bars. The skills lab is primarily utilized during Level I as the majority of skills are taught during that level. Interviews with students and faculty indicate that students in Levels II, III, and IV have limited access to the skills lab due to the lack of physical resources and instructor availability. Additional space is needed as well as equipment and faculty availability.
- Faculty share offices, typically three (3) to an office, in undersized offices, with no separate meeting space for private conferences with students.
- For private conferences, faculty office-mates must vacate the space or faculty and student have to move to a classroom. Each classroom has one or more windows into the interior hallway, and no classrooms have exterior windows.

Responses from Administration:

- Administration indicated plans to defer start of another Level I student cohort during the next academic term, scheduled to begin April 5, 2010.
- Administration has acknowledged a problem and has deferred entry of another Level I student cohort in the next academic term. Future student cohorts will be reduced to 30 students.
- Administration reported aggressively recruiting additional qualified faculty, including clinical instructors.
- Administration intends to put students in on-site clinical experiences on an ongoing basis, with staffing appropriate to support them.

- Clinical placements for students are reportedly sufficient to meet the needs of the program, including at least three (3) long-term care facilities and two (2) acute care facilities. Only staffing concerns (lack of available clinical instruction and supervision) led to use of the “in-house clinicals” model.
- Administration indicated a move to new facilities is pending completion of remodeling of currently existing space. The nursing program is targeted to move in approximately nine (9) months.

Note: With the planned deferral of additional student enrollment at this time, program administration anticipates running only three student groups in each of the next three academic terms as follows:

- 1) Levels II, III, and IV in the first term;
- 2) Levels I, III, and IV in the second term; and
- 3) Levels I, II, and IV in the third term.

The program could thus resume teaching all four levels in approximately one year--April 2011.

DRAFT LETTER

April 26, 2010

Constance Howard, BSN, MA, RN
Interim Director, Vocational Nursing Educational Program
Computer Career Center
7731 North Loop
El Paso, TX 77915

Dear Ms. Howard:

At the April 22-23, 2010 meeting, members of the Texas Board of Nursing discussed the approval status of the Computer Career Center Vocational Nursing Educational Program based on the report of the March 25-26, 2010 survey visit conducted by Board staff. The Board wishes to thank you, Mr. Antonio Rico, Campus Director, and Paulette Gallerson, Corporate Director of Education, for being present at the meeting to answer questions.

Based upon the discussion and review of documents, it was the decision of the Board to:

1. Change the approval status of the Computer Career Center Vocational Nursing Educational Program from full approval to full with warning.
2. Authorize staff to conduct a survey visit in Spring 2011 to evaluate the effectiveness of changes and strategies of the administration and faculty to correct deficiencies in compliance with Rule 214.

COMMENDATION:

1. Faculty are commended for their good intent and efforts to provide sound educational experiences for the students.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. It is recommended that the program administration identify and utilize the services of a seasoned nursing consultant with extensive experience in pre-licensure vocational nursing education and administration to provide regular and ongoing consultation in curriculum development, faculty development, clinical supervision, program administration, and compliance with Rule 214 in its entirety.
2. It is recommended that the above consultant serve as mentor to the Program Director.

REQUIREMENTS:

1. Rule 214.6(h) related to Administration and Organization: The Program Director shall complete the online portion of the orientation and submit certification of that completion by Monday, May 17, 2010 and shall attend the next scheduled face-to-face orientation workshop for new Deans/ Directors/ Coordinators (scheduling to be announced).

2. Rule 214.7(a)(6) related to Faculty: The program shall submit written faculty policies for orientation, faculty development, and evaluation of faculty by June 1, 2010, along with a written plan for orientation of faculty, an ongoing Faculty Development Plan, and a faculty evaluation plan by July 15, 2010.
3. Rule 214.7(o)(2) related to Faculty: The program shall submit minutes of monthly faculty meetings demonstrating faculty participation in planning, implementing, and evaluating the nursing program. Meeting minutes shall be submitted on a quarterly basis starting June 15, 2010.
4. Rule 214.9(a) related to Program of Study: The Program Director shall provide a detailed clinical schedule for each student cohort including the clinical facility to be used, surname of the assigned clinical instructor, and number of students in each group, and demonstrating the program of study includes the required and planned clinical learning experiences. Schedules shall be submitted at least two (2) weeks prior to the start of each academic term until the Spring 2011 Survey Visit is completed.
5. Rule 214.9(a) and (b) related to Program of Study: The faculty shall critically review the curriculum change proposal (final version dated 07/22/2009) submitted to the Board and approved July 30, 2009 to assure it meets ongoing needs of the program and submit a plan and schedule for implementation prior to actual implementation.
6. Rule 214.11 related to Facilities, Resources, and Services: Administration shall submit a plan for complying with the rule by June 1, 2010 and submit documentation and photos demonstrating compliance prior to admission of the next Level I student cohort.
7. Rule 214.13 related to Total Program Evaluation: The program shall submit a Total Program Evaluation Plan for Board staff review by July 1, 2010 and implement the plan on a going forward basis. Implementation of the plan shall be documented in meeting minutes and major changes in the nursing educational program shall be evidence-based and supported by rationale.

Recommendations are specific suggestions based upon program assessment indirectly related to the rules to which the program must respond but in a method of their choosing. Requirements are mandatory criterion based on program assessment directly related to the rule that must be addressed in the manner prescribed.

Documentation of the address of the above requirements to be met shall be submitted to the Board office at the times identified in each requirement. If you have any questions or if we may be of assistance, please contact Board staff at 512-305-7658 or by email at paul.waller@bon.state.tx.us

Sincerely,

Linda R. Rounds, PhD, RN, FNP
President

Paul R. Waller, PhD, RN
Nursing Consultant for Education

cc: Texas Workforce Commission
Council on Occupational Education