

**PROPOSED CHANGE OF PROGRAM APPROVAL STATUS  
 BASED ON 2009 NCLEX-PN® EXAMINATION PASS RATE  
 AND REVIEW OF SURVEY VISIT REPORT  
 TEXAS STATE TECHNICAL COLLEGE WEST TEXAS IN SWEETWATER, TEXAS  
 VOCATIONAL NURSING EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM**

**SUMMARY OF REQUEST;**

Consider staff recommendation and petition to change program approval status for Texas State Technical College West Texas Vocational Nursing Educational Program in Sweetwater, Texas, based on review of the NCLEX-PN® examination pass rate and survey visit report.

**HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE:**

Year	BON Approval Status	NCLEX-PN® Pass Rate	Number of First Time Candidates (Passed/Total)
2009	Pending	81.72%	76/93
2008	Full with Warning	69.18%	110/159
2007	Full	62.80%	103/164
2006	Full	84.13%	106/126

- Texas State Technical College (TSTC) at Sweetwater has a vocational nursing program at Sweetwater and an extension site at Breckenridge.
- TSTC in Sweetwater has been in operation since 1973.
- The Breckenridge extension of TSSTC was approved and began operation in 1991.
- TSTC was required to complete a Self-Study report because of the 2007 NCLEX-PN® examination pass rate falling below the required 80%. The Self-Study report (received in board office on July 16, 2008) evaluated factors which contributed to graduates' performance and a description of corrective measures to be implemented.
- Even though the program has been implementing ongoing corrective measures since 2007 to improve graduates' success on the NCLEX-PN® examination, the 2008 pass rate was 69.18%.
- At the July 2009 Board meeting, the approval status of the program was changed from full to full with warning and a survey visit was authorized.
- A survey visit was conducted November 17-18, 2009 by Janice Hooper and Robin Caldwell.
- The program has decreased their enrollment numbers and continued with many program improvements.
- The 2009 NCLEX® examination pass rate is 81.72%.
- The program is in the process of re-evaluating their nursing program to determine the most effective strategies for the future.
- The program is requesting the program's approval status be changed from full with warning to full.

**SUMMARY OF SURVEY VISIT:**

- Prior to the November 17-18, 2009 survey visit, board staff reviewed all program materials including syllabi, clinical evaluation tools, faculty and student handbooks, and total program evaluation plan.
- Activities during the survey visit included:
  - meeting with administration
  - meeting with program director
  - meeting with all faculty at Sweetwater and Breckenridge (via telecommunication)

- meeting with students from all levels
- visit to clinical site
- review of documents on site including faculty and student files, and faculty meeting minutes
- tour of facilities including library
- visit to class in session

**RELEVANT FINDINGS:**

- **Administration and Organization**  
The program director holds a Master's degree in nursing and provides outstanding leadership to the program. She exhibits enthusiasm, energy, and expertise, and is dedicated to excellence in nursing education. When she assumed the role of program director last year, she assumed responsibility for implementing the corrective measures begun by the previous director and she initiated additional improvements as well. She has a vision for the program and openness to ideas and suggestions, seeking the best for the program.

The visit with the administration of the college indicated that administration is supportive and committed to quality nursing education but that the past two year have been discouraging. The program's low pass rate has initiated a re-evaluation of the program with openness for redevelopment of the program or alternate programs.

- **Faculty**  
The faculty are a dedicated faculty group who use online teaching as well as other effective delivery strategies. Salaries have been raised to increase stability but salaries are still not competitive with industry. The only professional development presently supported by the college is attendance of the state vocational nursing education faculty meetings by some of the faculty. Faculty meet monthly with the Breckenridge faculty via telecommunication.
- **Students**  
At the time of the visit, there were 54 students at Sweetwater and 10 at Breckenridge. The students were diverse in age, experiences, and previous educational preparation and training. The intent for the future is to enroll only one cohort of 24 to 30 students each year instead of three as now occurs.
- **Program of Study**  
The curriculum is well-organized and includes all required components. All courses are web-enhanced with many check points for comprehension and supplementary teaching aids. The faculty use feedback from the standardized testing for curriculum revision.
- **Clinical Experiences**  
The program uses various clinical affiliating agencies in and around Sweetwater. The students have opportunities to engage in clinical learning experiences in long term care, acute care, pediatrics, maternal, mental health, and community settings.
- **Facilities/Resources**  
The program at Sweetwater is housed in a newly renovated, spacious building on a beautiful campus. The building provides several dedicated classrooms, two skills labs, student lounge, faculty lounge, and many complementary areas to enhance the learning environment. Faculty and students state that resources are available to meet program objective needs. Faculty have fully-equipped offices and classrooms are furnished with appropriate technology.

Pros:

- The program has made tremendous stride in improving the program of study and the success of students.
- The director of the program provides excellent leadership for the program and has a vision for the future.
- Faculty have become adept with technologies that were new and challenging to them and use them effectively to help the students learn.

- There is all indication that the corrective measures in place are making an impact on the success of the students.
- No areas of noncompliance with Rule 214 were identified.
- The administration expresses commitment to excellence in the nurse program at TSTC West Texas.

Cons:

- There is not clear direction for the future of the VN program at TSTC West Texas.

Comment:

Board staff suggested that the program director take the lead in conducting a community assessment to determine the needs of the community such as the numbers of licensed vocational nurses currently needed and projections for the next few years, and the need for registered nurses in the future to help in long term planning for the program.

**Recommended Commendations:**

1. The director is commended for excellent leadership in implementing corrective measures and planning for the future.
2. The faculty are commended for their dedication to the success of the program.

**Suggested Recommendations:**

1. Administration is encouraged to investigate the possibility of increasing salaries for the nursing faculty and program director.
2. Administration is encouraged to provide assistance for professional development for the faculty in areas of approved continuing education and assistance in their pursuit of advanced degrees (BSN and MSN).

**STAFF RECOMMENDATION:**

Move to change the approval status of Texas State Technical College West Texas Vocational Nursing Educational Program from full with warning to full and issue the commendations and recommendations in the attached letter (See Attachment #1).

**DRAFT LETTER**

April 26, 2010

Kathryn Smith, MSN, RN  
Director, Vocational Nursing Educational Program  
Texas State Technical College  
300 Homer K. Taylor Drive  
Sweetwater, Texas 79556

Dear Ms. Smith:

At the April 22-23, 2010 meeting, the Texas Board of Nursing discussed the approval status of the Texas State Technical College West Texas in Sweetwater, Texas, based on the report of the 2009 NCLEX-PN® examination pass rate and report of the survey visit. The members of the Board wish to thank you and for being present to answer questions.

Based on the discussion and review of the examination pass rate and the survey visit, it was the decision of the Board to change the approval status of the Texas State Technical College West Texas in Sweetwater Vocational Nursing Educational Program from full with warning to full effective immediately and issue the commendations and recommendations below:

Commendations:

1. The director is commended for excellent leadership in implementing corrective measures and planning for the future.
2. The faculty are commended for their dedication to the success of the program.

Recommendations:

1. The administration is encouraged to investigate the possibility of increasing salaries for the nursing faculty and program director.
2. The administration is encouraged to provide assistance for professional development for the faculty in areas of approved continuing education and assistance in their pursuit of advanced degrees (BSN and MSN).

A recommendation is a specific suggestion based upon program assessment indirectly related to the rules to which the program must respond but in a method of their choosing. Program shall respond to these recommendations by September 1, 2010.

If you have any questions or if we may be of assistance to you in the future, please contact board staff at (512) 305-6814 or [janice.hooper@bon.state.tx.us](mailto:janice.hooper@bon.state.tx.us).

Sincerely,

Linda R. Rounds, PhD, RN, FNP  
President

Janice I. Hooper, PhD, RN  
Nursing Consultant for Education

copy: Mike Reeser  
THECB