

**Report of a Survey Visit  
Blinn College in Brenham, Texas  
Vocational Nursing Education Program**

**Summary of Request**

Consider the report of the November 19, 2012, routine six-year survey visit to Blinn College Vocational Nursing Education Program in Brenham, Texas

**Historical Perspective:**

- Blinn College in Brenham was established in 1883. The college has four (4) campuses located in Bryan, Brenham, Sealy, and Schulenburg. Although the main campus is in Brenham, more than 70% of students attend the Bryan campus.
- The Blinn College in Brenham, Vocational Nursing (VN) Education Program began in 1961.
- The VN program is the sole allied health program offered at the Brenham campus.
- Blinn College is accredited by the Southern Association on Colleges and Schools (SACs). The most recent reaffirmation was in 2005, with the next reaffirmation in 2015.
- The NCLEX-PN® examination pass rates for the past five years are provided in the following table:

<b>Exam Year</b>	<b>NCLEX-PN® Examination Pass Rate</b>	<b>Number of First- Time Candidates (Passed/Total)</b>	<b>BON Approval Status</b>
2012	100%	14/14	Full
2011	100%	15/15	Full
2010	100%	17/17	Full
2009	100%	16/16	Full
2008	77.88%	14/18	Full

**Survey Visit Findings:**

Blinn College in Brenham has several positive features, including an attractive, well kept campus; ample parking; an array of student services; and, a pleasant learning environment.

**Pros:**

- The program's 2012 NCLEX-PN® pass rate was 100%.
- The program is directed by a knowledgeable leader focused on quality education.
- The program of study incorporates creative methods of using a hybrid design for course delivery, including online format, face-to-face instruction, student centered learning activities, and utilization of simulation.
- The curriculum is developed according to Board of Nursing (BON) rules and *Differentiated Essential Competencies (DECs) (2010)* objectives.
- New Blinn administrators expressed support for the VN program and stated that the nursing program is valued by the college and the community.
- Good communication between the director and administration was evident.
- The program has a stable, supportive faculty who are loyal to Blinn College and the nursing program.
- Students expressed a high degree of satisfaction with the program and confidence that the director and faculty are committed to their success.
- The program meets a need in the community for a vocational nursing education program and receives strong support from clinical affiliates.
- The program has a number of contracts with clinical affiliating agencies which provide a variety of clinical experiences for the curriculum.
- A detailed Total Program Evaluation (TPE) plan is in place and is used regularly in nursing faculty meetings.

**Cons:**

- The VN program instruction is carried out by the director, one(1) full-time, and one(1) part-time faculty. The director carries a full teaching assignment in addition to her duties and responsibilities as director of the VN program.
- Faculty report they routinely take work home with them because current teaching assignments do not allow sufficient time for grading papers and preparing lesson plans.

Findings from the survey visit (*See Attachment #1*) indicate that the program is in compliance with Rule 214.

**Rationale for Staff Recommendation:**

The following recommendation is made in an effort to ensure that the director has adequate time to fulfill the administrative responsibilities of the program, and faculty workloads allow for completion of all aspects of work involved in educating nursing students.

**Staff Recommendation:**

Move to accept the report of findings of the routine six-year survey visit to Blinn College in Brenham, Texas Vocational Nursing Education Program, and issue one (1) recommendation.

**Recommendation #1:**

It is recommended that administration begin the process to secure additional faculty for the VN program in order to free the director for administrative duties as well as facilitate effective faculty instruction and reasonable faculty workloads. (*See draft letter in Attachment #2.*)

**Summary of Survey Visit  
Blinn College in Brenham, Texas  
Vocational Nursing Education Program**

**Purpose of Survey Visit:** routine six-year survey visit.

**Date of Visit:** November 19, 2012

**Board Representative Conducting Visit:** Robin Caldwell, PhD, RN, CLNC, Program Evaluator

**Board Representative met with:**

- Michelle Marburger, MSN, RN, Director, VN Program
- Harold Nolte, EdD, President of Blinn College
- Debra R. LaCour, PhD, Vice President of Academic Affairs
- Donna Fricke, BSN, RN, VN Program Faculty
- Mary Lange, RN, VN Program Faculty
- Peggy Schwarze, VN Program Secretary
- Twenty-four (24) Vocational Nursing Students

**Activities Carried Out by Program Evaluator During Survey Visit:**

- conducted initial meeting with director and administration
- interviewed faculty
- interviewed students
- observed classroom teaching
- toured the facilities housing the nursing program and college campus
- reviewed the curriculum and all syllabi.
- reviewed the Student Handbook, Faculty Handbook, and clinical contracts.
- reviewed minutes of faculty meetings
- reviewed tests and clinical evaluation tools
- reviewed Total Program Evaluation (TPE)
- conducted exit meeting with director and administration

Findings Related to Administration:

- Michelle Marburger, MSN, RN was appointed director of the VN program in 2005. Her past experiences include fifteen years in prelicensure nursing education, having served as faculty in the VN program since 1998.
- Administration stated that the nursing program adds value to the college and fulfills a need in local communities.
- The President and Vice President of Academic Affairs noted that their initiatives are based upon the needs in the community.
- The director and faculty articulated appreciation for the support the program receives from new administration.
- Good communication between the director and administration was evident.
- According to the director and administration, the majority of graduates have no difficulty obtaining employment and often have employment offers prior to graduation.
- The director carries a full teaching assignment (classroom, skills lab, and clinical) in addition to her administrative duties and responsibilities in the VN program.

Findings Related to Program of Study:

- The twelve (12) month VN program is designed to be completed in three (3) semesters.
- There are a total of 1465 contact hours in the program of study: 623 didactic hours; 163 skills lab hours; 8 simulation lab hours; and, 671 patient care clinical hours.
- The organization of the curriculum is based upon sequential learning, with the first semester laying the foundation for the program.
- The program of study includes all required content and the curriculum is sound and logically

organized. The program of study is designed to ensure students are competent in skills prior to entering the clinical setting. The majority of skills are front loaded in the first semester.

- The curriculum includes IV therapy.
- The *Differentiated Essential Competencies (DECS) (2010)* have been fully incorporated into the curriculum.
- The teaching model is based upon face-to-face classes combined with online experiences. Two (2) classes, Nutrition, and Growth and Development, are taught completely online.
- Faculty and students receive training in distance education and IT support is available.
- Standardized testing is used for admission, progression, and remediation purposes.
- Students expressed that the syllabi and instruction are effective.

#### Findings Related to Faculty:

- One (1) full-time and one (1) part-time faculty teach in the VN program. Both were available for interview.
- The faculty are a stable, cohesive group who have been with the program from five (5) to six (6) years.
- The faculty meet BON requirements and offer a rich diversity in their educational and experiential backgrounds.
- Faculty discussed their teaching assignments and methods of instruction. Faculty expressed excitement about the curriculum and about their engagement in curriculum development and revision.
- Faculty reported they receive strong support from one another as well as the program director.
- Faculty indicated their teaching loads often do not allow sufficient time for grading assignments and preparing lesson plans, and reported they routinely find it necessary to take work home with them.
- Faculty confirmed that orientation occurs upon employment and professional development opportunities are provided.
- Faculty expressed appreciation for the funding and release time to attend the annual Texas Association of Vocational Nurse Educators (TAVNE) conference and cited the conference as the highlight of their professional development activities.
- Faculty have regular meetings and decision-making is collaborative.
- Review of faculty meeting minutes reveals that documentation regarding faculty actions and rationale was evident.
- Faculty files provide evidence that policies related to faculty qualifications and faculty evaluations are followed.

#### Findings Related to Students:

- The program admits one cohort of students annually. In August 2012, twenty-four (24) students were admitted from an applicant pool of fifty-five (55) qualified candidates.
- NEPIS data indicates that the program has the capacity to enroll twenty (20) students annually. According to the director, an additional four (4) students were enrolled in August 2012 with the understanding that additional faculty would be hired. However, college administration is currently undergoing a reorganization and the hiring of new faculty has been placed on hold.
- The director reported that attrition rates are historically low, between 10%-25%.
- Twenty-four (24) students are currently enrolled in the program and are scheduled to graduate in August 2013. All students were available for interview.
- Students stated that they enrolled in the VN program because of location, NCLEX-PN® pass rates, and the reputation of the program.
- Students unanimously agreed the program of study is effective and is preparing them well for clinical practice.
- Students cited clinical experiences along with the VN program director and faculty as being the highlights of the program.
- Students expressed that the director and faculty are receptive to their input about the program. Student policies are in place.
- Students receive required information written via in their handbook and verbally. Students indicated they received declaratory order information.
- The only suggestion several students made about the program was they wanted all face-to-face instruction as opposed to online classes.

- The majority of students reported they plan to seek further education to become registered nurses.

#### Findings Related to Clinical Learning Experiences:

- The program has active clinical contracts with eleven (11) affiliating agencies which provide exemplary clinical opportunities for the curriculum.
- Faculty provide responsible supervision in all clinical experiences.
- The clinical experiences are scheduled to match related didactic content in the classroom.
- The clinical evaluation tools demonstrate progression across the program and are used for formative and summative evaluation.
- The skills lab is available to students for practice during off-times with faculty supervision.
- The program utilizes simulation to prepare students for clinical and for remediation purposes.

#### Findings Related to Facilities, Resources, and Services:

- A full array of student services is offered on the Blinn College campus.
- There is a large library on the campus and it is used regularly by students. Students have access to online holdings from campus or home.
- Ample computer resources are available on the campus.
- The campus is well-kept and landscaped attractively.
- The building housing the VN program is modernly equipped and offers a positive learning environment. Space allocated to the nursing program is modest but adequate.
- The director has a large private office that is conveniently located to the program assistant, and faculty offices.
- The two (2) faculty share a large, fully-furnished office.
- Restrooms, study areas, and break areas are located in the building housing the VN program.
- The VN program does not have a dedicated conference room. Faculty and the director state they meet in available rooms or the director's office.
- A small kitchen and break area are provided for faculty.
- The VN program classroom and the eight (8) bed nursing skills laboratory are spacious, comfortable and modernly-equipped. Several mannequins and simulation models are available for instructional purposes in the skills lab.
- One (1) full-time program assistant provides dedicated clerical and secretarial support to the VN program
- Files are locked and located in a secure area.

#### Findings Related to Records and Reports:

- The program has an adequate Total Program Evaluation (TPE) Plan and it is used for decision making.
- Minutes indicate when decisions are made.
- Student and faculty files contained all documents required by Rule 214.

DRAFT LETTER

January 23, 2013

Michelle Marburger, MSN, RN, Director  
Vocational Nursing Education Program  
Blinn College in Brenham  
902 College Avenue  
Brenham, Texas 77833

Dear Ms. Marburger:

At the January 17-18, 2013 meeting, the members of the Texas Board of Nursing considered the report of the November 19, 2012 routine six year survey visit to the Blinn College in Brenham, Texas Vocational Nursing Education Program. It was the decision of the Board to accept the report of the survey visit (see *attachment #1*) and issue the following recommendation:

Recommendation #1:

It is recommended that administration begin the process to secure additional faculty for the VN program in order to free the director for administrative duties as well as facilitate effective faculty instruction and reasonable faculty workloads. A response to this recommendation is to be submitted to Board Staff by March 1, 2013.

Recommendations are suggestions based upon program assessment indirectly related to the rules to which a program must respond but in a method of their choosing.

If you have any questions or if we may be of assistance, please contact board staff at (512) 463-4631.

Sincerely,

Kathy Shipp, MSN, RN, FNP  
President

Sandi Emerson, MSN, RN  
Nursing Consultant for Education

copy:

Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board  
Harold Nolte, EdD, President of Blinn College  
M. Elia Flores, MEd, RT, Interim Division Chair of Allied Health