

**Report of a Survey Visit
Northeast Texas Community College in Mt. Pleasant, Texas
Vocational Nursing Education Program**

Summary of Request

- Consider the report of the March 26-27, 2013 routine survey visit to Northeast Texas Community College in Mt. Pleasant, Texas Vocational Nursing Education Program. A routine six-year survey visit to the Northeast Texas Community College VN Program was conducted on March 26 & 27, 2013 by Gayle Varnell, PhD, APRN, CPNP-PC, Contract Program Evaluator (See Attachment #1).

Historical Perspective:

- The Northeast Texas Community College (NTCC) Vocational Nursing (VN) Education Program in Mt. Pleasant, Texas began in 1985. The first class graduated fifteen (15) students in 1986.
- The VN and Associate Degree Nursing (ADN) programs were joined under one single program director in fall 1989.
- A new University and Allied Health building was built in 2006. The Division of Allied Health was revised to include a Dean of Allied Health.
- A 2006 Title III grant funded the acquisition of high fidelity simulation equipment and the development of a computer lab.
- In 2010, a Title III grant enabled the expansion of simulation resources and provided opportunity to develop an online and hybrid instructional format for the LVN-RN mobility track.
- Kathleen Ethridge, EdD, MSN, RN, was appointed interim director/coordinator of the VN program in October, 2012.
- The NCLEX-PN® examination pass rates for the past five years are provided in the table below:

Exam Year	NCLEX-PN® Pass Rate	Number of First-Time Candidates (Passed/Total)	BON Approval Status
2012	90.90%	20/22	Full
2011	100.00%	15/15	Full
2010	100.00%	23/23	Full
2009	100.00%	15/15	Full
2008	92.00%	23/25	Full
2007	94.44%	17/18	Full

Synopsis of the Survey Visit:

- Board contract evaluator identified many program strengths.
- Two (2) full-time and one (1) part-time faculty teach in the VN program only and two (2) faculty teach in both the VN and ADN program.
- Lisa McCuller, BSN, RN is the VN Program Coordinator. She reports directly to the Nursing Director.
- The VN program currently has nineteen (19) students.
- Findings from the survey visit indicated that the program is in compliance with Board Rule 214.

Pros and Cons from Survey Visit:

Pros:

- Appointed interim director in October 2012, Dr. Ethridge has been on faculty at NTCC since 1991 and has the knowledge, skills, and ability to effectively administer the vocational nursing education program.
- The interim director and faculty reported that the VN program receives strong support from NTCC administration.
- There were three faculty resignations last year.
- The VN coordinator, Lisa McCuller was appointed to provide stability and leadership to the program.
- Students interviewed expressed a high degree of satisfaction with the program and confidence that the coordinator/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 adequate contracts with clinical affiliating agencies in order for students to meet all clinical objectives in the program.
- All clinical learning experiences occur in faculty supervised, direct-patient care, hands-on, clinical settings. The program utilizes simulation to prepare students for hands-on patient care and for remediation purposes.

Cons:

- The nursing program has experienced some major changes in leadership in the past few months.
- The program learning outcomes, student handbook, and course syllabi objectives need to reflect the *Differentiated Essential Competencies (DECs) (2010)* objectives more completely.
- Faculty members have not attended the Texas Association of Vocational Nurse Educators (TAVNE) annual conference for several years.

Rationale for Staff Recommendations:

The program is in full compliance with Rule 214. The *Differentiated Essential Competencies (DECs) (2010)* are not fully incorporated into the curriculum, the program outcomes, course syllabi, and student handbook. Faculty professional development can be enhanced through attendance at the statewide vocational nursing educator's annual conference.

Recommendation #1:

The NTCC program director and faculty incorporate the *Differentiated Essential Competencies (DECs) (2010)* into program learning outcomes, course syllabi learning outcomes, and the student handbook. The Program Director shall submit a written response to Board Staff no later than October 31, 2013.

Recommendation #2:

Program and college administration consider providing release time and funding for faculty to attend the Texas Association of Vocational Nurse Educators (TAVNE) annual conference. The program director shall submit a written response to Board Staff no later than October 31, 2013.

Staff Recommendation:

Move to accept the report of findings of the routine six (6) year survey visit to Northeast Texas Community College in Mt. Pleasant, Texas Vocational Nursing Education Program and issue two (2) recommendations (See Attachment #2).

**Summary of Survey Visit
Northeast Texas Community College (NTCC) in Mt. Pleasant, Texas
Vocational Nursing (VN) Education Program**

Purpose of Survey Visit: routine survey visit

Date of Visit: March 26 & 27, 2013

Board Representative Conducting Visit: Gayle Varnell, PhD, APRN, Contract Program Evaluator

Board Representative met with:

- Kathleen Ethridge, EdD, MSN, RN, Interim Director of Nursing Programs
- Dr. Brad Johnson, President of Northeast Texas Community College
- Dr. Ron Clinton, Executive Vice President for Instruction
- Jena Hamra, PhD, Dean of Allied Health
- Lisa McCuller, BSN, RN VN Program Coordinator/Faculty
- Crystal Brown, BSN, RN, VN Program Faculty
- Jennifer Wilson, BSN, RN, VN Program Faculty
- Tonya Taylor, MSN, MBA, RN, ADN Program Faculty
- Cynthia Amerson, MSN, RN, VN/ADN Program Faculty
- Irene Richardson, MSN, RN ADN Program Faculty
- Nicole Walker, Administrative Assistant
- Casey Mayben, RN, Nursing Director East Texas Medical Center (ETMC) Hospital – Pittsburgh
- Perry Henderson, CEO, East Texas Medical Center Hospital – Pittsburgh
- Sixteen (16) Vocational Nursing Students

Board Representative conducted the following activities:

- held initial conference with interim director, dean, and administration;
- met with faculty members;
- interviewed students;
- observed second level medical-surgical classroom teaching;
- toured NTCC campus and East Texas Medical Center (ETMC) Hospital at Pittsburg, Texas;
- reviewed records and documents including: student and faculty files, minutes of faculty meetings, student and faculty handbooks, syllabi, clinical evaluation tools, and the Total Program Evaluation (TPE) Plan, and
- conducted exit interview with interim director and Dean of Allied Health.

Summary of Findings:

Findings Related to Administration:

- Administration expressed strong support for the VN program, stating that the program adds value to the college and fulfills a need in the community.
- The organizational chart was reviewed with administration.
- Dr. Kathleen Ethridge, EdD, MSN, RN was appointed interim director of the Nursing Programs at NTCC in September, 2012.
- Dr. Ethridge has an MSN from the University of Texas at Tyler and a Doctorate in Education from Texas A&M Commerce. She has been on faculty at NTCC since 1991.
- The interim director reported that the majority of graduates continue their education, remain in the community, and are able to find employment in local hospitals and health care agencies.

Findings Related to Program of Study:

- The VN program is a 12-month 48-credit hour program of study, based on sequential learning. There are a total of 1504 contact hours in the program of study: 656 didactic hours, 40 computer lab hours, 120 skills lab, 60 simulation lab, and 628 clinical contact hours.
- The program is well organized and includes all Board required content.
- The curriculum is designed to ensure students are competent in skills prior to entering the clinical setting.
- The curriculum includes intravenous (IV) therapy.
- The VN curriculum design and college level pre-requisite courses allow a smooth transition into the Associate Degree Nursing (ADN) program.
- The *Differentiated Essential Competencies (DECs) (2010)* have been incorporated into the curriculum, in the clinical evaluation tools. They are not clearly stated in the student handbook, program outcomes, or individual course objectives.
- The teaching model is based upon face-to-face and online modalities.
- Admission policies have sufficient rigor to ensure that qualified applicants are admitted into the program, including a weighted point system in college level prerequisite courses.
- Standardized testing is used throughout the program for progression, remediation, and graduation purposes.
- The program has implemented required remediation and tutoring as well as a NCLEX-PN ® review course.

Findings Related to Faculty:

- The VN instruction is carried out by an experienced RN faculty.
- Two (2) full-time and one (1) part-time faculty teach in the VN program only and two (2) faculty teach in both the VN and ADN program.
- The interim program director has a three (3) hour teaching load in addition to her administrative duties.
- The VN program coordinator carries a full teaching load.
- Faculty members are actively engaged in curriculum planning, implementation, and evaluation.
- The majority of faculty reported they have not attended the annual Texas Association of Vocational Nurse Educators (TAVNE) conference in recent years.
- Board required policies are documented.
- Faculty report they communicate and meet regularly. Minutes of faculty meetings are maintained.

Findings Related to Students:

- Sixteen (16) students were available for interview at the NTCC campus.
- Students stated that they enrolled in the NTCC VN program because of location, tuition, and the reputation of the program.
- Students cited that the strengths of the program are: clinical experiences, the size of the classes, and the faculty.
- 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 affiliating agencies which provide a variety of appropriate clinical experiences for the curriculum.
- All clinical learning experiences occur in faculty-supervised, direct-patient care, hands-on clinical settings.
- The clinical experiences are scheduled to match related didactic in the classroom.
- The clinical evaluation tools are individually based upon the course content and measure progression of student behaviors across the curriculum.
- Formative and summative clinical evaluations are evident.
- Board faculty-to-student ratios are maintained.

Findings Related to Facilities, Resources, and Services:

- The program is located on the main campus in Mt. Pleasant, Texas. The program has the capacity and faculty to admit twenty-four (24) students annually.
- The building housing the VN program is appropriately equipped and offers a positive learning environment.
- The director/coordinator's large private office is conveniently located to the VN faculty offices.
- Full-time faculty members are provided with fully-furnished private offices.
- The facilities include restrooms as well as faculty and student lounges and break areas.
- The VN program classrooms and the nursing skills laboratory are adequately equipped.
- The director stated that resources are adequate and meet the educational objectives.
- A 2006 Title III grant funded the acquisition high fidelity simulation equipment and computer equipment.

Findings Related to Records and Reports:

- Current and graduated students for past two years kept in locked filing cabinet in Nursing office.
- Faculty meeting minutes for the past three (3) years are available.

Findings Related to Total Program Evaluation:

- The written plan for systematic program evaluation includes all required components.
- Evaluation methods and tools are periodically reviewed by faculty.
- Minutes of program evaluation are maintained.
- The Total Program Evaluation was revised in May 2012.

DRAFT LETTER

July 22, 2013

Kathleen Ethridge, EdD, MSN, RN, Interim Director
Vocational Nursing Education Program
Northeast Texas Community College
P.O. Box 1307
Mt. Pleasant, Texas 75455 - 1307

Dear Dr. Ethridge:

At the July 18-19, 2013 meeting, the members of the Texas Board of Nursing considered the report of the routine survey visit to the Northeast Texas Community College Vocational Nursing Education Program in Mt. Pleasant, Texas. It was the decision of the Board to accept the report of the survey visit and issue the following two (2) recommendations:

Recommendation #1:

The NTCC program director and faculty incorporate the Differentiated Essential Competencies (*DECs*) (2010) into program learning outcomes, course syllabi learning outcomes, and the student handbook. The Program Director shall submit a written response to Board Staff no later than October 31, 2013

Recommendation #2:

Program and college administration consider providing release time and funding for faculty to attend the Texas Association of Vocational Nurse Educators (TAVNE) annual conference. The program director shall submit a written response to Board Staff no later than October 31, 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) 305-6814.

Sincerely,

Kathy Shipp, MSN, RN, FNP
President of the Board

Sandi Emerson, MSN, RN
Nursing Consultant for Education

copy: Texas Workforce Commission
Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board
President of Northeast Texas Community College