

**Consideration of Withdrawal of Approval  
Lamar State College, Port Arthur in Port Arthur, Texas  
Associate Degree Nursing Education Program**

**Summary of Request:**

Consider the change of status for Lamar State College, Port Arthur Associate Degree Nursing (LVN-RN) Education Program in Port Arthur, Texas, which has been on conditional approval status since January 2013, and Board Staff recommendation based upon the 2013 NCLEX-RN® examination pass rate, review of the 2012 Nursing Education Program Information Survey (NEPIS), the self-study summary and corrective actions, and the survey visits of November 9, 2012 and April 22-23, 2013.

**Historical Perspective:**

- The LVN-RN Program at Lamar, Port Arthur accepted its first student cohort in 1995.
- The LVN-RN program at Lamar Port Arthur, Port Arthur, Texas has experienced four (4) years of NCLEX-RN® examination pass rates below 80%, as shown in the following table:

<b>Examination Year NCLEX-RN®</b>	<b>Examination Pass Rate</b>
2013	63.06% (140/222)
2012	66.67% (90/135)
2011	78.08% (57/73)
2010	66.67% (26/39)

- In 2011, the program was required to submit a self-study report based upon a 2010 NCLEX-RN® examination pass rate of 66.67%. Findings from the report led to the development of several corrective measures which were implemented by the program (See attachment #1):
  - Closer monitoring of the progress of repeating students;
  - Rearranging course content so more challenging concepts were evenly distribute across the semesters;
  - Increasing the health promotion and maintenance content in didactic courses and on exams;
  - Adding a Professional Nursing Review and Licensure Preparation course; and,
  - Adding weekly scheduled classroom sessions to allow students to receive assistance with any didactic material covered in the on-line presentations unclear to them.
- At the January 2012 Board meeting the program's approval status was changed from full approval to full with warning as the program's 2011 NCLEX-RN® examination pass rate was 78.08%. A survey visit was authorized and subsequently conducted in November 2012 by Robin Caldwell, PhD, RN, Board contract evaluator (See attachment # 2).
- At the January 2013 Board meeting, the program's approval status was changed from full with warning to conditional as the 2012 NCLEX-RN® examination pass rate was 66.18%. The program was restricted from enrolling additional students in the program. A follow-up survey visit was conducted April 22-23, 2013 (See attachment #3).
- Despite implementation of corrective measures, the 2013 NCLEX-RN® examination pass rate for the LVN-RN program was 63.06%.
- Information provided by the program coordinator indicates three (3) student cohorts remain in the program. The information reports scheduled graduation dates for these cohorts of April 4, 2014, October 13, 2014, and March 2, 2015. The number of students in these cohorts has not been reported to Board Staff (See attachment #4).
- Rule 215.4(c)(3)(C)(i) states "Approval may be withdrawn if: the performance of first-time NCLEX-RN® candidates fails to be at least 80% during the examination year following the date the program is placed on conditional approval."

**Meeting Between Board Staff and Lamar State College, Port Arthur Representatives:**

- On November 14, 2013, Board Staff met with representatives from Lamar State College, Port Arthur to discuss the status of the LVN-RN Program and possible Board action. The agenda for this meeting is included in attachment # 5. Several facts were made evident at the meeting:
  - Lamar State College, Port Arthur administrative personnel expressed an understanding that strong admission requirements were essential for student success.
  - The program coordinator reported there was insufficient time from the findings of the November 2012 survey visit for corrective actions to remedy identified issues.
  - Lamar State College, Port Arthur administration introduced an option for program continuation, requesting consideration by the Executive Director (See attachment # 6).
- Rule 215.4(a)(5) states “The Board may withdraw approval from a program which fails to meet the Board’s requirements within the specified time. The program shall be removed from the list of Board-approved professional nursing education programs.”
- Withdrawal of approval from a program requires that the program design a plan to teach-out the currently enrolled students or find placement for them in other nursing programs.

**Pros of Withdrawal of Approval:**

- The mission of the BON is to protect and promote the welfare of the people of Texas by ensuring that each person holding a license as a nurse in this state is competent to practice safely.
- The Board fulfills its mission through the regulation of the practice of nursing and the approval of nursing education programs.
- Students and potential students of the program may be at risk for receiving inadequate educational preparation to practice safely.

**Cons of Withdrawal of Approval:**

- Withdrawal of approval can affect the morale within an institution.

**Rationale for Staff Recommendation:**

- Based upon the program’s history of approval status changes, the identification of areas of noncompliance with Rule 215 during the November 2012 and April 2013 survey visits, the four year history of NCLEX-RN® examination pass rates below the statewide benchmark of 80%, and consistent with the process described in Rule 215.4(a)(5), the recommendation is to withdraw approval from Lamar State College, Port Arthur LVN-RN Program in Port Arthur, Texas, and to remove the name of the program from the list of Board-approved professional nursing education programs following the teach-out.
- Rule 215.3(d)(1) provides guidance when a program closes, including the requirements that the director of the program notify the Board of the academic provisions and teach-out plan for students to complete the program; of provisions made for access to and safe storage of vital school records, including transcripts of all graduates; and the methods to be used to maintain requirements and standards until the program closes.
- Rule 215.3(d)(2) states “The program shall continue within standards until all students enrolled in the professional nursing education program at the time of the decision to close, have graduated. In the event this is not possible, a plan shall be developed whereby students may transfer to other approved programs.”
- Rule 215.4(c)(12) states “A program from which approval has been withdrawn may reapply for approval. A new proposal may not be submitted to the Board until after at least twelve (12) calendar months from the date of withdrawal of approval have elapsed.”

**Staff Recommendation:**

Move to withdraw the approval of Lamar State College, Port Arthur LVN-RN Program in Port Arthur, Texas, and to remove the name of the program from the list of Board-approved professional nursing education programs following the teach-out. Further, move to impose the requirements as indicated in the following letter and Board Order.

DRAFT LETTER

January 24, 2014

Anneliese Gongre, EdD, MSN, RN, CNE  
Coordinator, Associate Degree Nursing Education Program  
Lamar State College, Port Arthur  
P.O. Box 310  
Port Arthur, Texas 77641-0310

Dear Dr. Gongre:

At the January 23-24, 2014 meeting, members of the Texas Board of Nursing (BON) discussed the approval status of the Lamar State College – Port Arthur Associate Degree Nursing Education Program in Port Arthur, Texas, based upon the NCLEX-RN® examination pass rate for 2013, review of the 2012 Nursing Education Program Information Survey (NEPIS), findings of the 2010 Self-Study report, and survey visit reports. Members of the Board wish to thank you and .....for being present at the meeting to answer questions.

Rule 215.4(a)(5) states “The Board may withdraw approval from a program which fails to meet the Board’s requirements within the specified time. The program shall be removed from the list of Board-approved professional nursing education programs”.

After much deliberation, the Board has decided to withdraw approval from Lamar State College – Port Arthur Associate Degree Nursing Program in Port Arthur, Texas, to remove the program from the list of Board approved professional nursing education programs following the teach-out, and to impose the requirements in the Board Order. Since this will constitute a closure of the Professional Nursing Education program at Lamar State College – Port Arthur, the program is required to follow Board standards for closing a program.

It is the responsibility of the program director to inform the college administration of this action.

If you have questions, please contact Board Staff at [sandi.emerson@bon.texas.gov](mailto:sandi.emerson@bon.texas.gov) or 512-463-4631.

Sincerely,

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

Sandi Emerson, MSN, RN  
Nursing Consultant for Education  
Copy: Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board

**BEFORE THE TEXAS BOARD OF NURSING**

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<b>In the Matter of:</b>	§
Lamar State College–Port Arthur	§
Associate Degree	§
Nursing Education Program	§
Port Arthur, Texas	§

**ORDER OF THE BOARD**

A public meeting of the Texas Board of Nursing, hereinafter referred to as the Board, was held on January 23, 2014, 333 Guadalupe, Tower II, Room 225, Austin, Texas, to consider the approval status of the Lamar State College – Port Arthur Associate Degree Nursing Education program in Port Arthur, Texas, based upon the NCLEX-RN® examination pass rate for 2013, review of the 2012 Nursing Education Program Information Survey (NEPIS), findings from the Self-Study Report, and survey visit reports, pursuant to Section 301.157, Texas Occupations code and 22 Tex. Admin. Code Chapter 215.

Board members in attendance were: Kathy Shipp, MSN, RN, FNP; Nina Almasy, MSN, RN; Deborah Hughes Bell, CLU, ChFC; Patti Clapp, BA; Tamara Cowen, MN, RN; Sheri Denise Crosby, JD, SPHR; Marilyn J. Davis, RN, BSN, MPA; Shelby Elizzey, BBA; Monica Hamby, LVN; Josefina Lujan, PhD, RN; Kathy Leader-Horn, LVN; Mary LeBeck, MSN, RN; and Beverly Jean Nutall, LVN.

After review and due consideration of the filed materials, as well as the presentation by representatives from Lamar State College – Port Arthur in Port Arthur, Texas, and other interested parties, if any, the Board hereby WITHDRAWS approval of the Lamar State College – Port Arthur Associate Degree Nursing Education Program in Port Arthur, Texas, and hereby imposes the following conditions/requirements:

1. Lamar State College – Port Arthur LVN-RN program shall make academic provisions for the currently enrolled students to complete the nursing education program and teach-out arrangements that have been approved by the appropriate agencies (i.e., Texas Workforce Commission, Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, Texas Board of Nursing), and submit the teach-out plan to Board Staff no later than March 1, 2014.
2. Lamar State College – Port Arthur LVN-RN program shall make provisions for access to and safe storage of vital school records, including transcripts of all graduates. Plans for the provisions for access to and storage of the records shall be submitted to Board Staff by March 1, 2014.
3. Lamar State College – Port Arthur LVN-RN program shall develop a plan to be in compliance with Board requirements and standards until the program closes, and submit the plan to Board Staff no later than March 1, 2014.

4. Lamar State College – Port Arthur LVN-RN program shall develop a plan for transfer to an approved nursing education program any student who does not complete the program by the last established graduation date, and shall provide this plan to Board Staff no later than May 1, 2014.

Further, in accordance with 22 Tex. Admin Code § 215.4, the program may submit a new nursing program proposal no earlier than twelve (12) months from the date of this order.

Entered this 23<sup>rd</sup> day of January, 2014

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

**2010 Self- Study Summary and Corrective Actions**

**Submitted by Janet Hamilton, MSN, RN**

**Director, Allied Health**

**Lamar State College, Port Arthur**

**June 13, 2011**

**Lamar State College-Port Arthur**  
**Associate of Applied Science Upward Mobility Nursing Program**  
**Self-Study Report on Evaluation of Factors which Contributed to Graduates' Performance on the**  
**NCLEX-RN®**

**Introduction**

This self-study was completed in an effort to identify factors which may have contributed to the 2011 NCLEX-RN® pass rate of 78.08% for the Lamar State College-Port Arthur Associate of Applied Science Upward Mobility Nursing Program.

**Students**

All the students in the class met the admission requirements (Appendix A) for the program. No exceptions were made. The lowest score a student can obtain on the admission rating scale and meet the minimum criteria is 68 and the maximum score is 167. In comparing the admission data (Appendix B), the students who passed the exam had admission scores that ranged from 103.06 to 166.611. The scores of the students who did not pass NCLEX-RN® ranged from 115.573-145.287. The scores from the previous class ranged from 82.828-165.3. The characteristics of the 2010 (Appendix C) class are not different from the 2009 class (Appendix D). Of the students who were unsuccessful, one (1) had to repeat science or pre-requisite nursing courses prior to admission. Three (3) of the students who passed the exam also had to repeat pre-requisite courses. Three of the students who failed repeated nursing courses, but five other repeaters passed NCLEX-RN®. Two (2) of the students who failed NCLEX-RN® had to repeat the Exit Exam to pass it. However, three (3) other students who repeated the Exit Exam passed NCLEX-RN® on the first attempt.

All students who score less than 75 on a unit exam are expected to meet with an instructor to review the exam and plan to improve performance on subsequent exams. However, few students actually do it. The ones who do are usually able to improve their performance on subsequent exams. The Allied Health Department computer lab has numerous software programs available for student use for remediation.

Of the students who were unsuccessful on the NCLEX-RN®, two reported high levels of anxiety interfered with their performance on the exam (Both have repeated and passed). Two students struggled throughout the program because English is a second language. Three students reported personal problems which interfered with their performance. One of the major factors among the students who were unsuccessful was that they reported they did not study prior to taking the NCLEX-RN®. The scores on the Exit Exam for this class were some of the highest obtained by any graduating class (Appendix J). Apparently this resulted in a feeling of over-confidence among the students who felt they did not need to continue to practice NCLEX-RN® questions. Since they took the exam on April 19<sup>th</sup>, that meant they went two months or more without studying before taking the NCLEX-RN®. On the other hand, students for whom the faculty had concerns about their passing (especially after the results started coming in and some very strong students failed) passed the NCLEX-RN®. When these students were contacted, they reported continuing to study NCLEX-RN® questions and/or attending NCLEX Reviews right up to the time they took the exam.

Also included in the 2010 NCLEX-RN® results are two (2) students who were members of the 2009 class, but who did not take the NCLEX-RN® until after October 1, 2009 so their results were counted with the 2010 class. Eich and Oneil (2010) reported in the NCSBN NCLEX® Psychometric Research Brief "passing rates tend to

decrease with increased time between the date of becoming eligible to sit for the examination and the test date itself." The two students who were delayed did not pass the NCLEX-RN®. One of the students who failed the NCLEX-RN® repeated it in December and passed. The other student passed the NCLEX-RN® 7/27/2010 on her third attempt.

### **Policies**

There was no change in the enrollment management, progression or grading policies for the 2011 class.

### **Faculty**

All faculty teaching the class with the low pass rate were experienced educators. One had 15 years, one had 3 years of AD and 7 of VN and one had 2.5 years AD and 7 of VN. The most experienced faculty member went on medical leave one month into the fall semester and did not return. A VN faculty member who had completed 50% of a MSN program was moved to the AD Program. Even though this faculty member was relatively new to nursing education (2 years VN), he has an extensive background in education having owned and operated a software development company for many years and trained end users in the software. All the faculty were full-time. The 10:1 student faculty ratio was maintained for clinical. The curriculum is integrated and the courses team taught so each faculty teaches in the faculty's area of expertise.

The methods used to evaluate instructional effectiveness were the same as in previous years, student questionnaires, NCLEX-RN results including reports on students who failed, and Exit Exam reports.

The LSC-PA administration supports faculty in achieving the program goals. Funding is available to purchase requested equipment and resources. Recent acquisitions include high fidelity patient simulators to enhance clinical learning experiences in the lab. Faculty are provided money for travel and registration for continuing education activities.

### **Curriculum**

There were no major changes in the curriculum for the 2011 graduating class. It was reviewed in relation to the Differentiated Entry Competencies and the revised NCLEX-RN® test plan. There were minor changes (tweaking) based on that review.

One area that was changed with this group of students was to put most of the didactic instruction on-line. This process was begun with previous classes using a hybrid format. It was well received because it meets the students' needs to work around their employment schedule. The students were still required to come to campus for lab activities.

The frequency and number of exams were consistent with previous classes. One area that was previously identified as weak was nursing fundamentals. Students were encouraged to review fundamentals and more questions related to fundamentals were included on the course exams. This was done by increasing the number of items on the exams, not replacing items which covered other content on the exams.

Support courses have consistently been taught by the same faculty. There were no major changes in the content of the courses.

Clinical facilities are adequate to allow students to meet the objectives of the program. There were no major changes in the number of available facilities.

In an effort to make the clinical experiences more relevant to the students, preceptors were used during the final two semesters of the program. Since this is not the first class that had precepted clinical experiences, it is not likely that this was a factor in the students' performance on the NCLEX-RN®. Analysis of the clinical placements showed there was no apparent relationship to clinical site and success on the NCLEX-RN®. Students, faculty, and clinical partners indicated that the use of preceptors enhanced the clinical experience for transitioning to the RN role which is the focus of the Upward Mobility Nursing Program. In working with preceptors and students, the faculty determined that the continuity provided through this method of instruction provides the best environment for students to practice the clinical decision making that is required by the RN role. The number of hours spent in clinical and in the skills lab were the same for this class as for previous classes.

### **Testing and Evaluation**

All examinations are given on-line (using WebCT). They are set up so the "copy and paste" functions are disabled; students must all sign in within a 30 minute period and are allowed one minute per question for the exam. The exams were not significantly different than those used with previous classes.

After each exam, the faculty uses psychometric principles to evaluate the examination. Items missed by 50% or more of the class are reviewed. If an item is found to be flawed, the faculty may give credit for more than one answer or nullify the item. When an item is nullified, the key is changed so that all answers are credited as correct. That is, if a student answered the item as originally keyed, the student will retain the credit for the item. If a student's answer differs from the one originally keyed, the student is credited for the nullified item. Each exam is evaluated using specific criteria (Appendix E). That criteria is documented and is reviewed at the time of analysis of each exam. Items are edited as needed following the evaluation of the exam. Areas where students had difficulty are reviewed following the exam.

During the self-study process it was determined that significantly more exam items were credited for the 2010 class than for the 2009 class (Appendix F). One reason for this was that more "select all that apply" items were included on the exams used for the 2010 class. This may have been a factor in the class's performance on NCLEX-RN®. However, it is puzzling if it was a factor, because the students were able to perform so well on the exit exam.

### **Evaluation Methods for Class and Clinical**

The tools used to evaluate clinical are appropriate (Appendix G). They are designed to discriminate among the expected levels of achievement as students progress through the program of study. Critical elements are clearly identified. Clinical courses require that students receive a minimum grade of "C" (75) on written work and a satisfactory "S" on the clinical evaluation tool to pass the course. All the written work is evaluated using grading rubrics (Appendix H) which have undergone inter-rater reliability analysis.

Grades in didactic courses are based on test scores. During summer II there is a mid-term and a comprehensive final exam. In the fall and spring semesters each core didactic class has four exams given and

includes a comprehensive final exam. The classes are team taught so no statistics are available for individual faculty.

### Total Program Evaluation

The evaluation of the program is on-going. The latest total program evaluation is included in Appendix I. At the end of each semester, faculty evaluate the course and prepare for the next semester. Changes are made as needed. After students take the Exit Exam, faculty review the results with each student to help the student identify areas of weakness which the student needs to address to pass the Exit Exam (if the student did not pass on the initial attempt) or to prepare for the NCLEX-RN®. Students are provided remediation materials through the Evolve® website and are encouraged to use them.

The faculty also review the aggregate results of the Exit Exam to identify areas in the curriculum which need to be addressed. That data is trended on a chart (Appendix J) which is reviewed as part of the total program evaluation.

During the evaluation of the program, the faculty identified that weekly care plans had been replaced by reflective journaling. This was done to promote critical thinking in the clinical setting (clinical thinking). When evaluating the effectiveness of the journaling, faculty determined that there was a wide variance of the quality of the journals. After discussing the merits of journaling, the faculty developed a grading rubric (Appendix K) to use with subsequent classes. They also decided to require weekly care plans in addition to the reflective journaling.

As a result of the evaluation process, faculty determined that students lacked knowledge of fundamental skills and pharmacology. This was addressed by including discussion of fundamental skills and emphasizing pharmacology in didactic courses and on exams. Based on recommendations of the students, course content was rearranged to evenly distribute the more challenging concepts across the semester.

Once the faculty became aware of the students' lack of continued study to take the NCLEX-RN®, they looked at options available to address this issue. There is a course described in the Texas Higher Education Workforce Education Manual which the faculty felt may benefit the students in being more prepared for the NCLEX-RN®. The name of the course is RNSG 2230 Professional Nursing Review and Licensure Preparation. The course description and outcomes include:

**Course Description:** Review of concepts required for licensure examination and entry into the practice of professional nursing. Includes application of National Council Licensure Examination for Registered Nurses (NCLEX-RN) test plan, assessment of knowledge deficits, and remediation. This course lends itself to either a blocked or integrated approach.

**End-of-Course Outcomes:** Apply knowledge, skills, and understanding of critical concepts required for entry into professional nursing; demonstrate individual competency level applicable to nursing content areas; and exhibit readiness for licensure examination.

- ★ The faculty decided to add this course (Appendix M) to the curriculum and include the NCSBN's Review for NCLEX-RN Examination as part of the coursework. In addition, the faculty decided to require the students to take the Exit Exam twice and to have a conversion score average of 75% or greater as one of the requirements for passing the course.

*Review  
Course  
added  
2011*

One last issue must be addressed and that is the fact that the passing standard for the NCLEX-RN® was raised in April 2010. In reviewing the students' NCLEX-RN® Candidate Performance Reports (Appendix L), it is evident that they were close to passing. Historically, raising the passing standard has resulted in a decrease in the number of people who pass the NCLEX-RN® on the first attempt.

### Summary of Findings

No one area was identified that accounts for the poor showing on the NCLEX-RN®. The students were not unique. Areas for improvement in the curriculum identified by faculty were addressed. Testing and evaluation was adequate. Several factors contributed to the students' performance. Factors which faculty can influence were addressed in the on-going program evaluation. The addition of a course RNSG 2230 Professional Nursing Review and Licensure Preparation to enhance the students' preparation for the NCLEX-RN®. The other change that was made was to require all the students to take the Exit Exam twice and have an average conversion score of 75% or greater. Since the program is only one year long, changes have to be implemented immediately if they are to positively impact the outcome for subsequent classes.

### Conclusions

Efforts at improvement should be focused on assisting the students in developing their clinical thinking skills. The most effective way to do that is to increase the student's involvement in the learning environment and enhance their test taking skills.

### Corrective Measures

Measure	Time Line	Person Responsible	Evaluation Criteria
Closely monitor progress of repeating students.	Ongoing	Faculty	100% progress to next course or graduate
Rearrange course content to evenly distribute the more challenging concepts across the semester	Fall 2010	Faculty	100% of faculty agree content is evenly distributed
Increase the health promotion and maintenance content in didactic courses and on exams	Fall 2010 and ongoing	Faculty	100% of faculty agree content is increased and each exam has a minimum of 5 items testing related content
Add RNSG 2230 Professional Nursing Review and Licensure Preparation course	Spring 2011 and ongoing	Faculty	100% of students take course

Measure	Time Line	Person Responsible	Evaluation Criteria
<p>Add weekly scheduled classroom sessions to allow students to receive assistance with any didactic material covered in the on-line presentations which is unclear to them.</p>	<p>Fall 2010 and ongoing</p>	<p>Faculty</p>	<p>100% of faculty agree classroom sessions are beneficial to students who attend and students who attended reported increased understanding of content discussed.</p>

## Copy of January 2013 Board Report

### Consideration for Change in Approval Status from Full with Warning to Conditional Lamar State College at Port Arthur, Texas Associate Degree Nursing Education Program

**Summary of Request:**

Consider a proposed change in the approval status of Lamar State College Associate Degree Nursing (ADN) Education Program at Port Arthur, Texas, based upon the review of the 2012 NCLEX-RN® examination pass rate, the 2012 Nursing Educational Program Information Survey (NEPIS), issues of noncompliance with Rule 215, and findings from the November 7, 2012 survey visit.

**Historical Perspective:**

- The Lamar State College-Port Arthur LVN to RN, Upward Mobility Associate Degree Nursing Education Program has been in operation since 1995.
- NCLEX-RN® examination pass rates for the past six (6) years and NEPIS data on enrollment and graduation numbers are noted in the tables below:

**NCLEX-RN® Examination Pass Rates:**

Year	BON Approval Status	NCLEX-RN® Pass Rate	Number of First Time Candidates (Passed/Total)
2012	Full with Warning	66.67%	90/135
2011	Full	78.08%	57/73
2010	Full	67.67%%	26/39
2009	Full	96.00%	24/25
2008	Full	86.49%	32/37
2007	Full	75.00%	27/36

**NEPIS Data on Reported Enrollment and Graduation of Students:**

Year	Total Enrollment	New Admissions	Graduates
2012	532	532 (5 cohorts)	127
2011	486	471 (5 cohorts)	87
2010	135	97 (3 cohorts)	34

- Lamar State College at Port Arthur (LSC-PA) is accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools.
- In May 2012, Dr. Anneliese Gongre was approved as the program coordinator for the Lamar State College at Port Arthur LVN-RN Upward Mobility nursing program upon retirement of the long-time director. Recruitment for the position of Director of the Allied Health Department is ongoing.
- In 2011, the program was required to complete a self-study due to 2010 NCLEX-RN® pass rate of 66.67%. The report was received in the Board office on June 16, 2011.

- A comprehensive self-study identified factors which faculty thought to have contributed to the low pass rate and included a description of corrective measures to be implemented. The majority of factors identified centered around student issues including test anxiety, poor study habits, and language barriers.
- In 2010, the program delivery method changed from face-to-face to on-line. Board staff became aware of this change during the November 7, 2012 survey visit.
- Even though the program has been implementing corrective measures since 2010 to improve graduates' success, the pass rate has remained below the Board benchmark of 80%: 78.08% in 2011 and 66.67% in 2012.
- At the January 2012 meeting, the approval status of the program was changed to full approval with warning, based upon an NCLEX-RN® pass rate below 80% for two consecutive years and a survey visit authorized.
- On November 7, 2012, Board program evaluator, Dr. Robin Caldwell, CLNC, conducted a survey visit, identifying several major areas of concern during the visit.

### **Summary of Survey Visit and Findings**

Purpose of Survey Visit: Focus visit related to approval status

Date of Visit: November 7, 2012

Board Representative Conducting Visit: Robin Caldwell, PhD, RN, CLNC

#### Activities Carried out by Board Representative During the Survey Visit:

- Conducted an initial meeting with administration and Upward Mobility program coordinator:  
Annaliese Gongre, EdD, MSN, RN, ADN Program Coordinator  
Gary D. Stretcher, EdD, Vice-President for Academic Affairs  
W. Sam Monroe, LLD, President of Lamar State College in Port Arthur  
Nancy Cammack, EdD, Dean of Technical Programs  
Janet Hamilton, MSN, RN, former Allied Health Chair and Director of the ADN Program
- Interviewed three (3) full-time ADN program faculty :  
Mark Douglas, MSN, RN  
Shirley MacNeil, MSN, RN, CNE  
W. Kathryn Smith, MSN, RN
- Interviewed ADN program students
- Met program staff:  
Bethany Smith, BSN, RN, Clinical Placement Specialist  
Donna Wolfe, Administrative Assistant
- Toured the facilities housing the nursing program and the LSC-PA campus.
- Reviewed program documents and records
- Conducted a summary conference with the program coordinator and administration

#### General Findings:

- The director's position has been vacant since April 2012 due to the retirement of long-time Allied Health Chair and ADN Program Director, Janet Hamilton, MSN, RN. Recruitment for a new director is ongoing.
- The program is currently administered by Anneliese Gongre, EdD, MSN, RN.
- In 2010, the program transitioned to online delivery of all didactic content with all precepted clinical learning experiences.

- Student enrollment has dramatically increased since initiation of the online format. 820 students were enrolled in the program at the time of the survey visit. NEPIS data reports 486 students were enrolled in the program in 2011, and 135 students were enrolled in 2010.
- Three (3) full-time faculty and five (5) part-time faculty are responsible for the program instruction.
- The program utilizes contracted nurse educators, not all of whom are licensed in Texas, to assist faculty and provide online instructional support to students.
- Nursing students residing in a ninety (90) mile radius of the campus are classified as local students, while students outside this radius are classified as distance students. Disparities between the two groups are evident in admission criteria, campus attendance requirements for orientation, testing, skills/simulation lab activities, as well as opportunities for tutoring and instructional support.
- Admission policies lack rigor.
- Students are not required to demonstrate skills proficiency at any point in the program (i.e. upon admission or prior to clinical performance of a skill/procedure).
- The majority of students enrolled in the accelerated 10.5 month program works full-time and has English as a second language.
- The nursing program does not have dedicated secretarial support.
- Written policies for nursing faculty orientation and professional development were not evident at the time of the survey visit.
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#### Findings Related to Administration:

- Dr. Gongre is an experienced educator, having taught in both baccalaureate and associate degree nursing programs prior to her appointment as coordinator of the LSC-PA Upward Mobility Nursing Program.
- Administration discussed the LSC-PA service agreement with Instructional Connections, a company which supplies contracted nurse educators titled "academic coaches" or "teaching assistants."
- Administration reported that SACs program evaluators commended the college's distance education practices with the exception of insufficient faculty in the ADN program.
- LSC-PA administration and the program coordinator expressed a commitment to take corrective actions necessary to ensure learner success and bring the program into compliance with BON Rule 215.

#### Findings Related to the Program of Study:

- The program of study includes all required content and the curriculum is sound and logically organized.
- Syllabi are complete and provide a comprehensive view of the course.
- The Differentiated Essential Competencies (DECs) (2010) are fully incorporated into the curriculum.
- 2012 NEPIS data reports a total of 1408 contact hours in the program of study: with 784 didactic hours; 136 computer lab hours; 32 skills lab hours; 72 simulation lab hours; and, 384 patient care clinical hours.
- The accelerated, online program is designed to be completed in 10.5 months. The majority of courses are taught in five (5) week terms. Two courses are taught in eight (8) week terms and two courses are taught over ten (10) week terms. Didactic content is delivered in an asynchronous format over each term.
- The program admits five (5) cohorts of students each calendar year: January, April, June and September for the distance cohort and in July for the local cohort.

- Students complete self-paced modules and participate in discussion forums. in a self-paced format.
- Distance students take all examinations online, while local students test on campus. According to the coordinator, local students have an option to test online and must pay a \$25.00 fee to do so.
- In discussions with the current program coordinator and former program chair, it was reported that a minor curriculum change was implemented in 2011 based upon a review of the DEC's and the revised NCLEX-RN® test plan. Additionally, an NCLEX-RN® review course was added to the curriculum.
- As part of the curriculum, students are required to take a five (5) week, three (3) credit hour computer course. The course is designed to provide students with the knowledge and skills needed to facilitate learning through online instructional delivery systems.
- Standardized testing is used for progression, remediation, and exit examination purposes. Standardized testing is not used for admission into the program.
- Established admission policies are not applied to distance students. For the local cohort, a weighted priority point system ranks each student according to grades received in pre-requisite and pre-nursing courses. Students applying for the distance cohort are not similarly ranked and are required to meet only minimum admission criteria.
- Local cohort students are required to come to campus for orientation, skills/simulation lab activities, and tutoring. No such requirement is in place for distance cohort students.
- Syllabi are complete and provide a comprehensive view of the course.

#### Findings Related to Faculty:

- Three (3) full-time and five (5) part-time (adjunct) faculty carry out the ADN instruction.
- Full-time faculty teach all didactic courses in the online program and supervise student precepted clinical learning experiences in the local cohort. Part-time faculty reside in various regions throughout the state and supervise the precepted clinical experiences for students in the distance cohort.
- The three (3) full-time and five (5) part-time faculty meet BON qualification requirements and offer a rich diversity in their educational and experiential backgrounds.
- Three (3) full-time faculty were available for interview. They stated that teaching students and helping change their lives through higher education is rewarding.
- Faculty have demonstrated competencies in distance education and possess the expertise to teach in areas assigned.
- Faculty meeting minutes were reviewed. Documentation regarding faculty actions and rationale was evident.
- Faculty confirmed that orientation occurs upon employment and professional development opportunities are provided. However, written faculty policies concerning orientation and professional development were not evident during the survey visit.
- Faculty reported that the contracted "academic coaches" serve as teaching assistants and facilitate the management of the 820 students enrolled in the distance cohort. Grading assignments, providing feedback, and serving as the students' first-line of contact for instructional issues were cited as the academic coaches' primary duties.
- Faculty did express concerns about the increased enrollment in the program and lack of rigor in admission policies.

#### Findings Related to Students:

- Administration and the program coordinator reported there are currently 820 students enrolled in the program. The program admits four (4) distance cohorts and one (1) local cohort each year.

- The breakdown of admission periods for the five (5) cohorts follows:
  - 02-20-2012 (123 distance)
  - 05-14-2012 (125 distance)
  - 07-09-2012 (44 local)
  - 08-06-2012 (128 distance)
  - 10-31-2012 (400+ distance)
- Student attrition data was not available at the time of the focused survey visit.
- Three (3) local students who are scheduled to graduate in May 2013 were available for interview. All three (3) students were graduates of the LSC-PA VN program and stated they enrolled in the ADN program because of location as well as the positive experience they received in the VN program.
- Students unanimously agreed that the online didactic instruction is effective. They are scheduled to begin their first clinical rotations in Spring 2013.
- Students cited the three (3) full-time faculty as being the highlight of the program and praised the expertise, availability, and commitment accessible to them.
- The three (3) local students reported they come to campus every two (2) weeks for testing as well as on a weekly basis for the instructional support opportunities offered by the faculty.
- Students expressed that all faculty are receptive to input about the program. They also have a student representative to the program governance.
- Student policies are written and available.
- Students receive required information in their handbook and verbally. Students indicated they have received declaratory order and eligibility information.

#### Findings Related to Clinical Learning Experiences:

- The program utilizes preceptors as the sole means of instruction and supervision in clinical settings.
- 2011 NEPIS data reports sixty-six (66) preceptors are used in the program.
- The program has active clinical contracts with 140 agencies throughout the state. Bethany Smith, BSN, RN, ADN Program Clinical Placement Specialist, secures clinical and preceptor agreements for the nursing program and conducts visits to clinical agencies throughout the state.
- The program coordinator reported that, to ensure compliance with BON required clinical ratios, no more than eighty (80) students at a time are scheduled for clinical rotations. Additionally, faculty generally supervise between seventeen (17) to twenty (20) students in the precepted clinical learning experiences.
- Preceptor policies and signed contracts are in place.
- Clinical evaluation tools demonstrate progression across the program and are used for formative and summative evaluation.
- A discussion with the coordinator revealed that students are not required to demonstrate skills proficiency prior to clinical performance of the skill. A current Texas LVN license and recent work history satisfies competency requirements.
- The skills lab and simulation lab are available to students for practice with faculty supervision. However, it is not feasible for distance students to take advantage of these valuable learning opportunities.

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

- The ADN program is located in a large building which has numerous dedicated classrooms and skills/simulation labs.

- Audiovisual equipment is available in every classroom, and skills lab and simulation equipment are excellent.
- The director and faculty have spacious, private offices.
- Adequate student and faculty break areas and restrooms are available.
- A full array of student support services are offered on the LSC-PA campus.
- The ADN program shares one full-time administrative assistant with the VN program and four (4) other allied health programs.
- The coordinator indicated that dedicated clerical support for the ADN program would be a welcome and needed addition.

#### Findings Related to Records and Reports:

- Files are locked and located in a secure area.
- Student and faculty files reviewed contained all documents required by Rule 215.
- The Total Program Evaluation (TPE) Plan is adequate and numerical benchmarks are provided in all categories. It is used for decision making and minutes indicate when decisions are made.
- Outcomes for the two cohorts (distance and local) are not tracked separately.
- Written faculty policies regarding orientation and professional development were not available for review.

#### **PROS and CONS:**

##### Pros:

- The program coordinator is well qualified and an experienced educator who is respected by administration, faculty, and students.
- The coordinator and faculty expressed dedication to the students and eagerness to make changes that will help the program.
- The full-time faculty appears to be a stable, cohesive group who have embraced technology and changes in the program to promote the success of students.
- The DECs have been fully incorporated into the curriculum.
- Faculty have demonstrated competencies in distance education and possess the expertise to teach in areas assigned.
- Students receive orientation to technology and online instruction.
- Technological support is available to faculty and students.

##### Cons:

- The 2012 NCLEX-RN® pass rate is 66.67%.
- The program does not have a director in place.
- The program has initiated the use of contracted nurse educators, not all of whom are licensed in Texas, to assist faculty and provide online instructional support and feedback to students in didactic and clinical courses.
- Two distinct cohorts exist in the program: a local cohort (forty-four students from a four county area within a 90 mile radius of the Port Arthur campus); and, a distance cohort (776 students from other Texas cities or counties not part of the four county area). Disparities between the two cohorts are evident in the rigor of the program, quality of instruction, admission criteria, campus attendance requirements for orientation, testing, skills/simulation lab activities, as well as opportunities for tutoring and instructional support.
- The program does not have a sufficient number of faculty to develop, design, and teach courses.
- Admission policies lack rigor.
- Skills proficiency of students is not evaluated to ensure competency before students perform skills and nursing procedures in the clinical setting.

- The accelerated 10.5 month program is not conducive to students' success, the majority of whom work full-time and have English as a second language.
- Written nursing faculty policies regarding orientation and professional development were not available at the time of the survey visit.
- Actual practices do not appear to be in compliance with program policies or handbook.
- The program does not have dedicated clerical support.
- It is unclear to Board Staff that the program is in compliance with Rule 215.

### **Background for Recommendation:**

Staff recommendation for the change in approval status and for requirements and recommendations are based upon noncompliance issues identified during the survey visit and practices that impact program effectiveness as well as the persistent NCLEX-RN® examination pass rate below 80%.

Rule 215.4(c)(3)(B)(I) *related to Approval* states: "A program may be placed on conditional approval status if the pass rate of first-time candidates, as described in paragraph (2)(A) of this subsection, is less than 80% for three (3) consecutive examination years; (ii) the faculty fails to implement appropriate corrective measures identified in the Self-Study Report or survey visit; (iii) the program has continued to engage in activities or situations that demonstrate to the Board that the program is not meeting Board requirements and standards". The program was placed on full with warning status at the January 2011 Board meeting. The pass rate has remained below 80% for three consecutive years.

Rule 215.4(a)(4) *related to Approval* states: "Conditional approval is issued by the Board for a specified time to provide the program the opportunity to correct deficiencies. (A) The program shall not admit students while on conditional status. (B) The Board may establish specific criteria to be met in order for the program's conditional approval status to be changed".

**Therefore**, the purposes of conditional approval status are to allow faculty additional time to correct deficiencies which include improving the performance of graduates on the licensing examination and to protect additional students from the risk of receiving educational preparation that does not meet Board standards.

### **Staff Recommendation:**

Board Staff recommend the following (*see draft letter in Attachment #1*)

1. Change the approval status of Lamar State College - Port Arthur Associate Degree Nursing Education Program in Port Arthur, Texas, from full with warning to conditional and authorize Board Staff to conduct a survey visit.
2. The program may not enroll students while on conditional status. The program will remain on conditional approval status until the program demonstrates a pass rate for first time candidates of at least 80% on the 2013 NCLEX-RN® examination. The NCLEX-RN® examination year is October 1, 2012 through September 30, 2013.
3. The program shall demonstrate full compliance with Rule 215 prior to a change in approval status.
4. Issue the following requirements and recommendations:

#### Requirement #1:

§ 215. 7(c)(2)(A)(B)(C) *related to Faculty* states that "Each nurse faculty member shall hold a current license or privilege to practice as a registered nurse in the State of Texas; show evidence of teaching

abilities and maintaining current knowledge, clinical expertise, and safety in the subject areas of teaching responsibility; hold a master's degree or doctoral degree, preferably in nursing. **Therefore**, the program coordinator shall provide evidence to Board Staff that all contracted nurse educators providing instructional support in the ADN program hold a current license or privilege to practice as a registered nurse in the State of Texas and meet the specified faculty qualifications.

Requirement #2:

§215.7(a)(6) *related to Faculty* states "Written policies for nursing faculty shall include: plans for faculty orientation to the institution and the nursing program, faculty development, and evaluation of faculty. **Therefore**, the program coordinator shall provide Board Staff with copies of faculty policies related to orientation and professional development.

Requirement #3:

§215.7(i) *related to Faculty* states "Faculty shall be responsible for: (1) supervising students in clinical learning experiences; (2) supervising all initial nursing procedures performed by the student in the clinical area and ascertaining that the student is competent before allowing the student to perform an actual nursing procedure independently." **Therefore**, the program shall provide evidence to Board Staff that faculty assess the skills proficiency of students and ensure competency before allowing students to perform the skills and nursing procedures in the clinical setting.

Requirement # 4:

§215.7(b) *related to Faculty* states " A professional nursing education program shall employ sufficient faculty members with graduate preparation and expertise necessary to enable the students to meet the program goals. The number of faculty members shall be determined by such factors as: (1) The number and level of students enrolled; (4) The number and geographic locations of affiliating agencies and clinical practice settings;" **Therefore**, administration and the program coordinator shall critically evaluate current student enrollments, and the number and geographic locations of affiliating agencies and shall provide evidence to Board Staff that faculty-to-student ratios are reasonable and the program has sufficient faculty necessary to attain the goals and outcomes of the nursing education program.

Requirement #5:

§ 215.8(c) *related to Students* states "The program shall have well-defined written nursing student policies based upon statutory and Board requirements, including nursing student admission, dismissal, progression, and graduation policies that shall be developed, implemented and enforced." **Therefore**, the program shall provide evidence to Board Staff that all students admitted to the program meet the written admission policies.

Requirement # 6:

§215.9(b)(3) *related to Program of Study* states " Delivery of the curriculum through distance education shall comply with the requirements of this section and 215.10 of this title (relating to Clinical Learning Experiences) to ensure that students receive comparable curriculum, supervised clinical experiences, and formative and summative evaluations". **Therefore**, the program shall provide evidence to Board Staff that the rigor of the program, quality of instruction, and availability of tutoring and instructional support is comparable for all students enrolled in the program.

Recommendation #1:

The administration, coordinator, and faculty are encouraged to consider the feasibility of increasing the program length to be reasonable for students and to facilitate learner success on the NCLEX-RN®

Recommendation #2:

The program is encouraged to strengthen admission policies with the addition of a pre-entrance examination to ensure that the most qualified applicants are admitted into the program.

Recommendation #3:

It is recommended that the nursing program have full-time, dedicated clerical support.

Responses to these requirements and recommendations shall be submitted to Board Staff by April 15, 2013.

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.

A requirement is a mandatory criterion based on program assessment directly related to the rule that must be addressed in the manner prescribed.

## Copy of July 2013 Board Report

### Report of Follow-up Survey Visit Lamar State College Port Arthur in Port Arthur, Texas Upward Mobility Nursing Education Program (LVN-RN)

**Summary of Request:**

Consider the report of the April 22-23, 2013, follow-up survey visit to Lamar State College, Port Arthur LVN to RN Upward Mobility Professional Nursing Education Program (LVN-RN) in Port Arthur, Texas (See Attachment #1.) The survey visit was conducted by Sandi Emerson, MSN, RN and Virginia Ayars, EdD, MS, RN, Board Consultants for Nursing Education. A previous survey visit was conducted on November 7, 2012.

**Historical Perspective:**

- Lamar State College LVN-RN Upward Mobility Associate Degree Nursing Program has been in operation since 1995.
- In May 2012, Dr. Lisa Gongre was approved as the program director.
- Lamar State College - Port Arthur (LSC-PA) is accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools. The last reaffirmation visit was in 2003.
- The LSC-PA LVN - RN program approval status was changed to conditional at the January 2013 Board meeting.
- In 2010, the program delivery method changed from face-to-face to entirely on-line and became available statewide to licensed vocational nurses.
- The NCLEX-RN® examination pass rates for the past six (6) years are shown in the table below:

Exam Year	NCLEX-RN® Pass Rate	Number of First Time Candidates (Passed/Total)	BON Approval Status
2012	66.67%	90/135	Full with Warning
2011	78.08%	57/73	Full
2010	66.67%	26/39	Full
2009	96.00%	24/25	Full
2008	86.49%	32/37	Full
2007	75.00%	27/36	Full

**Synopsis of the Survey Visit:**

- LSC-PA administration expressed commitment to implementing corrective actions for the nursing program to be in full compliance with Board Rule 215.
- The total number of students enrolled in the program was not available at the time of the visit.
- Faculty are experienced in online delivery of an educational program.
- Students do not receive clinical learning experiences which encompass the lifespan and include caring for patients with acute and chronic illnesses and rehabilitative care.
- The program of study is delivered totally online with all precepted clinical experiences.
- Three (3) full-time faculty and twenty (20) part-time faculty are responsible for program instruction.
- Eighteen (18) academic coaches, contracted nurse educators, assist the full-time faculty with assignment grading, class discussion, and responding to student questions.

- Written policies for faculty committees were not evident at the time of the visit.
- The program director does not have authority for hiring or approving teaching staff.
- Faculty are not members of the clinical review or program evaluation committees.

**Pros and Cons from the Survey Visit:**

Pros:

- Responses to the January 2013 six (6) requirements and three (3) recommendations were provided to Board staff by the timeline specified.
- Program full-time faculty are experienced, enthusiastic and dedicated to the program and its students.
- The program coordinator is an experienced educator and meets Board qualifications for the role of dean/director.

Cons:

- The director does not have full authority for the program operations.
- Clinical learning experiences are not in compliance with Rule 215 requirements.
- Faculty participation in program evaluation and the utilization of affiliating agencies is not evident.
- The program does not have a sufficient number of faculty to develop, design, and teach courses.
- Clear, current student enrollment, progression completion, and readmission data was not available to Board staff at the time of the visit.

**Rationale for Recommendations:**

The program is not in compliance with Rule 215. The program director does not have full authority to direct the program in all its phases. The program of study does not include instruction in the required four (4) content areas. Faculty bylaws were not evident. Required faculty committee structure is lacking.

**Staff Recommendation:**

Move to accept the report of findings from the Board authorized follow-up survey visit to the LSC-PA LVN - RN Program in Port Arthur, Texas, and to issue three (3) requirements:

Requirement # 1:

§ 215.6 (l) *related to Administration and Organization:* The administration shall assure that the program director is given the authority to direct the professional nursing education program in all its phases, including approval of teaching staff, selection of appropriate clinical sites, admission, progression, probation, dismissal of students, and enforcement of student policies. The program shall be required to submit to the Board staff examples of minutes that reflect the director has full authority for the program of study by September 15, 2013.

Requirement #2:

§ 215.7 (n)(1)(2)(A-B) *related to Faculty:* The program director shall assure policies are developed and implemented related to faculty organization, including committee membership and documentation of meetings. Policies related to faculty bylaws and committee membership shall be provided to Board staff by September 15, 2013.

Requirement #3:

§ Rule 215.9 (e)(2) *related to Program of Study:* The faculty shall provide didactic instruction and clinical learning experiences for all students that include, but are not limited to, the following areas: medical-surgical, maternal/child health, pediatrics, and mental health nursing that teach students to use a systematic approach to clinical decision-making and prepare students to safely practice professional nursing through the promotion, prevention, rehabilitation, maintenance, restoration of health, and palliative end-of-life care for individuals of all ages across the life span. The program director shall provide evidence to Board staff of proposed curriculum changes which include the four (4) content areas by September 15, 2013.

**Summary of Survey Visit  
Lamar State College Port Arthur in Port Arthur, Texas  
Professional Nursing Education Program (LVN-RN)**

**Purpose of Survey Visit:** Follow-up survey visit per Board authorization

**Dates of Visit:** April 23 and 24, 2013

**Board Staff Conducting Visit:** Sandi Emerson, MSN, RN and Virginia Ayars, EdD, MS, RN

**Board Staff met with:**

- Anneliese Gongre, EdD, MSN, RN, Program Coordinator
- Nancy Cammack, EdD, Dean of Technical Programs
- W. Sam Monroe, LLD, President, Lamar State College, Port Arthur
- Ben Stafford, EdD, Department Chair for Allied Health
- Gary D. Stretcher, EdD, Vice-President for Academic Affairs
- Mark Douglas, MSN, RN, Instructor
- Shirley MacNeil, MSN, RN, CNE, Instructor
- W. Kathryn Smith, MSN, RN, Instructor
- Patricia Guidry, Admissions Facilitator
- Bethany Smith, BSN, RN, Clinical Contract Specialist
- Crystal Tait, Secretary I
- Donna Wolfe, Secretary II

**Activities Carried Out by Board Staff During Survey Visit:**

- Conducted an initial meeting with director and administration
- Interviewed full-time LVN-RN program faculty
- Met with program staff
- Interviewed nine (9) LVN-RN program students
- Reviewed program documents and records (Student and faculty files, faculty meeting minutes, handbooks)
- Observed students performing simulation scenario
- Toured facilities housing and supporting the nursing program
- Conducted exit conference with program director and administration

Findings Related to Administration and Organization:

- LSC-PA administration participated in the opening and closing interviews. They expressed a commitment to take corrective actions necessary to bring the program into compliance with Board Rule 215.
- Dr. Lisa Gongre, program director, is an experienced educator and is qualified by education and experience to lead the professional nursing education program.
- Dr. Gongre does not have full authority to direct the LSC-PA LVN-RN program.

Findings Related to Faculty:

- The three (3) full-time faculty meet BON qualifications. They are responsible for all didactic instruction in the online program of study.
- Faculty demonstrate competencies in online learning methodology and possess the expertise to teach in assigned areas.
- Faculty serve as members of only the progression and curriculum committees. Minutes for the two (2) committees document evidence of faculty discussion and decisions.
- Faculty report that program decisions regarding student progression and course design have been overridden by LSC-PA administration.
- Faculty report that the number of contracted nurse educators varies with each course.

- Faculty report being unaware of program admission criteria and policies.
- Faculty by-laws were not available at the time of the survey visit.
- Faculty report that the pre-requisite course, ITSC 1371, Computers in Nursing, is not being taught as designed by nursing faculty. The course was designed by faculty as a cornerstone to the online program.

#### Findings Related to Students:

- The Department Chair for Allied Health reported that 781 students were enrolled in the program at the time of the survey visit.
- Student attrition data was not available at the time of the survey visit.
- All currently enrolled students have completed a competency skills check-off.
- Nine (9) students from the local cohort were interviewed. They expressed that the three (3) full-time faculty members respond timely to e-mail inquiries.
- Students report that test reviews are conducted after each examination.
- Students report that tutoring or remediation sessions have been offered in previous courses and were helpful. No tutoring or remediation sessions are being offered in the current course.
- Students recommended that end of course testing be conducted at the conclusion of the didactic portion. They indicated that retention of course information suffered with the length of time between the last didactic course and the end of the program.

#### Findings Related to Program of Study:

- The 2010 Differentiated Essential Competencies (DECs) have been incorporated into the program curriculum.
- Didactic content is "front-loaded" in the curriculum, with students completing course work in the four (4) content areas prior to clinical learning experiences.
- Comprehensive end of program testing occurs approximately four (4) months after completion of didactic content.
- The current program length of ten and a half (10.5) months is being revised. All courses will be standardized to eight (8) weeks.

#### Findings Related to Clinical Learning Experiences:

- The program utilizes preceptors as the sole means of clinical instruction and supervision.
- The clinical placement specialist reports being overwhelmed securing clinical placements for up to one hundred sixty (160) students every two (2) months.
- Preceptor policies and signed contracts are in place.
- Clinical experiences for persons throughout the life span with acute and chronic illnesses and rehabilitative care is not provided for all students.
- It is unclear if all students are provided opportunities for participation in clinical conferences.
- Simulation experiences are constructed using both NLN and faculty prepared templates.
- It is unclear if written clinical objectives are shared with all clinical preceptors prior to or concurrent with individual student clinical experiences.
- Clinical learning experiences are not provided in the four (4) content areas: medical-surgical, maternal/child health, pediatrics, and mental health. Students are placed in one clinical setting for a clinical course. There are two (2) clinical courses in the curriculum.

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

- A simulation center, located within a short walking distance of the nursing building, is well-equipped with up-to-date hospital equipment, mannequins, and supplies. De-briefing rooms with the capability for viewing taped simulation activities are available.
- Faculty offices are private, spacious, and equipped with a computer, printer, desk, chair, side chairs, and bookcase.
- Additional clerical support has been acquired for the program operation.

#### Findings Related to Records and Reports:

- Student and faculty files are maintained in locked, secure filing cabinets.

- Records and files for the two (2) online tracks (local and distance) are maintained by separate personnel and in separate locations.
- Student and faculty files reviewed contained all documents required by Rule 215.
- A program faculty handbook was not available at the time of the survey visit.
- Other than course syllabi, all program documents available for review were dated 2008.

**DRAFT LETTER**

July 22, 2013

Anneliese Gongre, MSN, EdD, RN, CNE  
Coordinator, Associate Degree Nursing Education Program  
Lamar State College, Port Arthur  
P. O. Box 310  
Port Arthur, Texas 77641-0310

Dear Dr. Gongre:

At the July 18-19, 2013 meeting, the members of the Texas Board of Nursing considered the report of the April 22-23, 2013 survey visit to the Lamar State College LVN-RN Professional Nursing Program in Port Arthur, Texas. Members of the Board wish to thank you and for being present at the meeting to answer questions.

Based upon the discussion and review of the survey visit report, it was the decision of the Board to issue the requirements in the attached Board Order. A requirement is a mandatory criterion based upon program assessment directly related to the rules that must be addressed in the manner prescribed.

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: Sam W. Monroe, LLD President, Lamar State College, Port Arthur  
THECB

## BEFORE THE TEXAS BOARD OF NURSING

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### **In the Matter of:**

Lamar State College, Port Arthur  
Upward Mobility LVN-RN Nursing Education Program  
in Port Arthur, Texas

### **ORDER OF THE BOARD**

A public meeting of the Texas Board of Nursing, hereinafter referred to as the Board, was held on July 18, 2013, 333 Guadalupe, Tower II, Room 225, Austin, Texas, to consider the report of the Lamar State College Port Arthur Upward Mobility LVN-RN Nursing Education Program in Port Arthur, Texas. Based upon the NCLEX-RN® examination pass rates for the past six (6) years, the follow-up survey visit conducted on April 22 and 23, 2013, and compliance with Rule 215 pursuant to Section 301.157, Texas Occupations Code and 22 Tex. Admin. Code, Chapter 215.

Board members in attendance were: Kathy Shipp, MSN, RN, FNP; Nina Almasy, MSN, RN; Deborah Hughes Bell, CIU, ChFC; Patti Clapp, Bal Tamara Cowen, MN, RN; Sheri Denise Crosby, JD, SPHR; Marilyn J. Davis, RN, BSN, MPA; Richard Robert Gibbs, LVN; Josefina Lujan, PhD, RN; Kathy Leader-Horn, LVN; Mary LeBeck, MSN, RN; and Beverly Jean Nutall, LVN.

After review and due consideration of the filed materials, as well as presentation by representatives from Lamar State College, Port Arthur Upward Mobility LVN-RN Nursing Education Program in Port Arthur, Texas, and other interested parties, if any, the Board hereby issues the following requirements;

#### **Requirement # 1:**

§ 215.6 (I) *related to Administration and Organization*: The administration shall assure that the program director is given the authority to direct the professional nursing education program in all its phases, including approval of teaching staff, selection of appropriate clinical sites, admission, progression, probation, dismissal of students, and enforcement of student policies. The program shall be required to submit to Board staff examples of minutes that reflect the director has full authority for the program of study by September 15, 2013.

#### **Requirement #2:**

§ 215.7 (n)(1)(2)(A-B) *related to Faculty*: The program director shall assure policies are developed and implemented related to faculty organization, including committee membership and documentation of

meetings. Policies related to faculty bylaws and committee membership shall be provided to Board staff by September 15, 2013.

Requirement #3:

§ Rule 215.9 (e)(2) *related to Program of Study*: The faculty shall provide didactic instruction and clinical learning experiences for all students that include, but are not limited to, the following areas: medical-surgical, maternal/child health, pediatrics, and mental health nursing that teach students to use a systematic approach to clinical decision-making and prepare students to safely practice professional nursing through the promotion, prevention, rehabilitation, maintenance, restoration of health, and palliative end-of-life care for individuals of all ages across the life span. The program director shall provide evidence to Board staff of proposed curriculum changes which include the four (4) content areas by September 15, 2013.

Entered this 18<sup>th</sup> day of July, 2013.

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

**Exhibit 1****LAMAR STATE COLLEGE-PORT ARTHUR****Schedule of Courses Required to "Teach Out" the Remaining On-Line Student Cohorts**

<b>Course &amp; Cohort</b>	<b>Course Start Date (Week of)</b>	<b>Course End Date (Week of)</b>	<b>Cohort Completes (Week of)</b>
RNSG 2362 (Cohort 13)	Feb 3, 2014	Mar 3, 2014	
RNSG 1207 (Cohort 13)	Mar 17, 2014	Apr 14, 2014	
RNSG 2230 (Cohort 13)	Mar 17, 2014	Apr 14, 2014	
			Apr 14, 2014
<b>Separator</b>			
RNSG 2535 (Cohort 13-A)	Feb 3, 2014	Mar. 24, 2014	
RNSG 2361 (Cohort 13-A)	Apr 14, 2014	Jun 2, 2014	
RNSG 2362 (Cohort 13-A)	Jun 16, 2014	Aug 4, 2014	
RNSG 1207 (Cohort 13-A))	Aug 25, 2014	Oct 13, 2014	
RNSG 2230 (Cohort 13-A)	Aug 25, 2014	Oct 13, 2014	
			Oct 13, 2014
<b>Separator</b>			
RNSG 1423 (Cohort 13-B)	Feb 3, 2014	Mar 24, 2014	
RNSG 1260 (Cohort 13-B))	Feb 3, 2014	Mar 24, 2014	
RNSG 2514 (Cohort 13-B)	Apr 14, 2014	Jun 2, 2014	
RNSG 2535 (Cohort 13-B)	Jun 16, 2014	Aug 4, 2014	
RNSG 2361 (Cohort 13-B)	Aug 25, 2014	Oct 13, 2014	
RNSG 2362 (Cohort 13-B)	Oct 27, 2014	Dec 15, 2014	
RNSG 1207 (Cohort 13-B)	Jan 12, 2015	Mar 2, 2015	
RNSG 2230 (Cohort 13-B)	Jan 12, 2015	Mar 2, 2015	
			Mar 2, 2015

When classes begin in February 2014 the students enrolled in Cohort 13 will lack 3 courses for graduation. Completion of the program by these students is slated for the week of April 14, 2014.

Students in Cohort 13 who fail or drop a class will be accommodated in Cohort 13-A.

The students in Cohort 13-A will enroll in RNSG 2535 on February 3, 2014. The program will conclude for these students in October 2014.

Students currently on Cohort 13-A may also fail a class or need to drop a class. These students will be accommodated in Cohort 13-B.

Cohort 13-B consists of students who have failed a course and is scheduled to conclude in March 2015. It was developed specifically to give these students as many chances to repeat

courses as previous students. Not every student in the cohort will enroll in every course; their individual class schedules will depend on which course they are required to repeat and the courses they subsequently will be required to take.

The Upward Mobility program has a policy relating to withdrawals and dismissals from the program. The policy states:

*The program director has the right to initiate the administrative withdrawal of any student whose attendance, conduct, scholastic abilities, attitude or lack of aptitude for professional nursing makes it inadvisable for that student to continue in the program.*

The program has historically operationalized "lack of scholastic ability and lack of aptitude for professional nursing" as students who have failed two classes. These students have traditionally been subject to review by the program's progression committee and are subject to being dropped from the program. Most of the students in Cohort 13-A have either failed or dropped 1 course. Unless the progression committee votes otherwise, a second failure will drop a student from the program. A student in 13-A who fails a course for the first time will move into Cohort 13-B.

All students in 13-B have failed 1 course. Another failure will mean their exit from the program. This system of courses should fully accommodate all of the students currently enrolled in the program.

College policy mandates that in order to be considered a student of the college all students must remain active at a certain level each semester. Students who do not participate for 2 semesters are no longer considered students of the college. While it would be possible for a student to deliberately drop a course on both Cohort 13-A and then deliberately drop a course on Cohort 13-B, these students would have been declared inactive for 2 of this program's terms and would be subject to administrative drop for nonparticipation.

**Texas Board of Nursing  
Agenda  
Meeting with Lamar Port Arthur College Representatives  
November 14, 2013  
Hobby Building, Tower III, Suite 460**

***Representatives Attending from Lamar State College, Port Arthur***

- Dr. Lisa Gongre, Program Coordinator
- Dr. Sam Monroe, President
- Dr. Gary Stretcher, Vice-President of Academic Affairs
- Dr. Nancy Cammack, Dean for Technical Programs
- Dr. Ben Stafford, Department Chair for Allied Health

***Representatives from the Board of Nursing***

- Katherine Thomas, MN, RN, FAAN, Executive Director
- James Johnston, General Counsel
- Kristin Benton, MSN, RN, Director of Nursing
- Mark Majek, Director of Operations
- Anthony Diggs, MSCJ, Director of Enforcement
- Janice I. Hooper, PhD, RN, FRE, Nursing Consultant for Education
- Virginia Ayars, EdD, MS, RN, Nursing Consultant for Education
- Sandi Emerson, MSN, RN, Nursing Consultant for Education
- Gayle Varnell, PhD, RN, Nursing Consultant for Education

***Handouts Provided:***

- Rule 215.4 *Approval*- Relevant Portions
  - Rule 215.3(d) Closing a Program
  - Status Report of Program Approval
  - July 2013 Board Report with copy of Board Order sent to Lamar State College, Port Arthur
  - January 2014 Board Report with copy of letter submitted to Lamar State College, Port Arthur
  - Summary and Corrective Actions from June 2011 Lamar State College, Port Arthur Self-Study Report
1. Greeting and Introductions – Kathy Thomas
  2. Summary of Program Approval Status – Sandi Emerson  
Self-Study Report findings - June 2011  
Change in Approval from Full to Full with Warning – January 2012 Board Meeting  
Survey Visit – November 2012  
Change in Approval from Full with Warning to Conditional – January 2013 Board Meeting  
Survey Visit – April 2013
  3. Recommendation to Board – January 2014 Board Meeting  
Rule 215.4 Approval of Professional Nursing Education Programs: 215.4(a)(5) and 215.4(c)(3)(C)
  4. Response from Lamar State College, Port Arthur Representatives
  5. Responsibilities of the Program: Rule 215.3(d)(1) Closing a Program
  6. Questions and Further Actions
  7. Adjournment



Lamar State College — Port Arthur  
MEMBER TEXAS STATE UNIVERSITY SYSTEM™

November 25, 2013

Ms. Katherine A. Thomas  
Texas Board of Nursing  
333 Guadalupe #3-460  
Austin, TX 78701

Dear Ms. Thomas:

Please find herewith enclosed a letter written by Dr. Lisa Gongre, Coordinator of the Upward Mobility Nursing Program and a proposal for continuation of the Upper Mobility Nursing Program at Lamar State College-Port Arthur.

Any consideration you may give this request will be sincerely appreciated.

Sincerely,

Sam Monroe  
President

/ds

Enclosures



**LAMAR STATE COLLEGE-PORT ARTHUR**  
A Member of The Texas State University System

25 November 2013

Katherine Thomas, MN, RN, FAAN  
Executive Director  
Texas Board of Nursing

Dear Ms. Thomas,

Thank you for the opportunity to directly address the concerns expressed in our recent meeting. For students currently in the program:

Every student in the nursing program received an e-mail from me regarding the Board decision. All have been assured the program will continue for current students with ample opportunity to complete the program. Graduates passing the NCLEX-RN from LSC-PA's nursing program will be licensed as an RN in the State of Texas. Responses from students were positive. Messages have been sent to all faculty members with the letter to students attached. All staff, teaching assistants, and faculty are ready and willing to answer student concerns.

Administration has approved hiring a consultant for the courses that will continue. BON Education Consultants have been very helpful with referrals. Dr. Robin Caldwell has also given me the names of several well-qualified consultants.

Students will get a message from this Coordinator in every course with positive comments, general information about the course, the course that will follow the one they are enrolled in, expectations and contact information (There is a welcome page and module assignments with all this information; my message will give additional information). The ease of replying to my e-mail message may encourage better communication.

Feedback from students regarding ATI's coaches has been discussed with faculty and Department Chair for Allied Health. The decision was made to remove ATI Capstone Review from The Professional Review Course. The NCSBN Review will be placed back in the capstone course. The confusion and inconsistencies the students related prompted this decision. Accurate information will be coming from faculty and Coordinator in the capstone course.

The Service Pack that caused the 'test review' issue was taken care of months ago with a Blackboard 'patch'. IT concerns for distance testing is now minimal. Students review each exam when they finish the exam while still being proctored.

The scheduling delay for the 2014 courses has been addressed and the students in the cohort seem to be satisfied to still be a May graduate.

LSC-PA uses an integrated, concept based curriculum. I will be contacting Dr. Helen Reid who graciously offered access to peer-reviewed course design and curriculum for concept based nursing programs at the last two Deans and Director's meetings in Austin.

I will be happy to answer any concerns Board members may have not included in this message.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Lisa Congre". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the typed name and title.

Dr. Lisa Congre,  
Coordinator – Upward Mobility Nursing Program.

**Lamar State College-Port Arthur  
Proposal to the Texas Board of Nursing**

Lamar State College-Port Arthur accepts the Texas Board of Nursing's finding that the College should "teach out" the students currently enrolled in its on-line LVN-to-RN transition Associate of Applied Science program (Upward Mobility Nursing). The College has developed a schedule of classes that will permit the remaining students to graduate. The schedule is attached (please see Exhibit 1).

Lamar-Port Arthur requests that the BON not implement the second part of its finding and therefore not require closure of the program by withdrawing Board approval. Instead, the College is asking the BON to permit it to enroll a new Upward Mobility class in July 2014. This class would utilize a traditional approach to nursing education, including:

1. A rigorous, competitive admissions selection process;
2. A relatively small cohort of 40 students;
3. Face-to-face instruction on campus for all courses in the program;
4. No teaching assistants;
5. Clinical training in local hospitals that is supervised by college faculty.

**Background**

The Board of Nurse Examiners granted final approval to the Upward Mobility program in 1996. The program was campus based and included all of the elements previously listed and to which we propose to return.

Upward Mobility seemed to reach its stride in examination year 2003 when it achieved a first-time passing rate of 93.75%. The program went on to accomplish a 90%+ pass rate in each of the next 3 years and attained an average passing rate of 94.4% (102/108) over the 2003-2006 period. The program also realized a 96% rate for graduates attempting for the first-time in 2009. The Board of Nursing issued letters of commendation to the College after each of those 5 examination years.

Also, in its report on the April 2008 site visit the Board issued the following commendations:

- *Commends the nursing program director and nursing faculty for the progressive and innovative approach to nursing education, especially regarding the use of computer technology (i.e., testing, student evaluation tools, student assignments).*
- *Commend the nursing program director and nursing faculty for the methods of evaluation of students, especially the clinical evaluation tools and grading rubrics (specific grading criteria).*
- *Commend the nursing program director and nursing faculty for the cooperative and collegial spirit that fosters a positive nurturing learning environment for the students.*

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The first time-pass rate for the 7-year period 2003-2009 was 89.8% (185/206).

Two significant events occurred in the 2010 examination year

- The College expanded the Upward Mobility program to include cohorts of students who were taught on-line. These students were recruited from across the state and were not subject to the same admission requirements as the campus students. However, the courses in which they were enrolled had the same course title, number, and learning objectives as the campus courses. In retrospect, probably the director and faculty placed too much attention on implementing the on-line courses in January 2010 and not enough on the campus students.
- The faculty expanded the use of on-line instruction in the on-campus cohort.

For whatever reason—possibly the two above, perhaps others—the 2010 examination year was the worst in program history up to that time. The following year the program went to all on-line instruction for both the campus (local) and distance students.

The program admitted its last local cohort in July 2012. The cohort graduated in May 2013.

### **Proposal**

If approved by the BON, the proposed 2014 class would utilize the College's former approach to nursing education, including:

1. A rigorous, competitive admissions selection process;
2. A relatively small class of 40 students;
3. Face-to-face instruction on campus for all didactic courses in the program;
4. No contracted nurse educators serving as teaching assistants;
5. Clinical training in local hospitals that is supervised by College faculty. Clinical classes will encompass the entire lifespan and will include caring for patients with acute and chronic illnesses and rehabilitative care.

The competitive admissions process will include an admissions exam which will be used as a part of the admission rating scale. Applicants will also be required to demonstrate skills proficiency prior to admission on campus in the skills lab. In fact, a skills proficiency check-off was initiated in clinical classes early 2013 for current on-line students (please see Exhibit 2).

The College understands that it has not conducted a campus program of this type in 4 years and that nursing education is dynamic. However, while we have not taught in the traditional manner we have taught and graduated 15 cohorts of students during this time. We are constantly updating and improving our courses. Indeed, because we annually enroll 4-6 cohorts of students we accumulated data that allowed us to make informed decisions and programmatic changes in much less time than a

traditional program that enrolls 1 or 2 cohorts per year. Because of the way our enrollment cycle was established we could complete a cycle of research on 2 cohorts in a 16-18 week period instead of 1-2 years for a traditional program, making immediate changes as needed.

### **Reasons to Adopt the Proposal**

Access to associate degree nursing training in Southeast Texas has become problematic.

- Lamar University has closed its generic ADN program.
- Lamar State College-Orange has experienced 3 consecutive years of first-time pass rates below 80%. Lamar-Orange plans to accept a class in January 2014 but cannot accept a class in fall 2014. Should the institution experience a pass rate below 80% in examination year 2014 it possibly will not be permitted to accept another RN class until the 2016-2017 academic year.
- Lamar-Port Arthur admitted its last local class in fall 2012.

However, Lamar-Port Arthur and Lamar-Orange continue to produce large numbers of LVNs. During the 5-year period 2008-2012 Lamar-Port Arthur graduated 379 vocational nurses and achieved a first-time passing rate of 91%. Lamar-Orange graduated 640 students during this time.

Undoubtedly, a well-qualified cohort of students could be assembled from these students. Additionally, the waiting list for the on-line program has approximately 90 students who live within driving distance of the campus (please see Exhibit 3).

If Lamar-Port Arthur is not allowed to accept a class in July 2014 it will be at least a year before area LVNs can enroll in a local RN program. Unlike the Houston area, rural southeast Texas relies solely on the 2-year Lamar institutions for its AAS nursing education. Beyond these colleges, the closest training available is in Baytown, more than 70 miles to the west, Houston at 80-100 miles, and in Lufkin, more than 120 miles to the north.

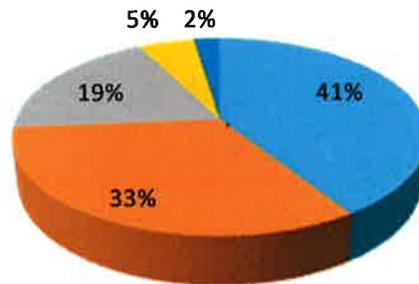
Exhibit 4 illustrates the drive-time of students to reach the campus of Lamar State College-Port Arthur. This map demonstrates that students ordinarily served by the Lamar colleges will face a drive time in excess of an hour and a half to reach the closest of the Houston-area programs, with the program in Lufkin situated more than 2 hours away.

Some local hospitals are no longer hiring vocational nurses, so it is important to provide training opportunities for qualified LVN applicants who wish to obtain the more advanced license.

Another reason is the ethnic diversity of the region and student body. According to BON data, only 9.7% of the registered nurses in Texas are African-American and only 8% are Hispanic. Conversely, Lamar State College-Port Arthur has a "minority majority" student body (please see chart below). Lamar-Port Arthur could make a modest difference by placing more minority nurses in the profession.

## Student Enrollment By Ethnicity Fall 2013

■ White ■ Black ■ Hispanic ■ Asian ■ Other



A final reason is our position in local hospitals. The College feels that a continuing absence in local hospitals will result in those training slots being awarded to programs in the Houston area. Regaining those positions might be difficult in the future.

### Summation

There should be a difference in Lamar-Port Arthur's request than what is usually presented by other colleges in similar positions. Those programs may have requested just one more year to resolve their problems, or perhaps needed some time to demonstrate the efficacy of changes to their programs.

The difference is that Lamar-Port Arthur is requesting an opportunity to return to a traditional program — a format in which we were very successful just 4 years ago.

We feel that a delay of 18 months would be very harmful to our area LVNs who are desperate to transition to RNs.

Finally, we pledge to continue to "teach out" the on-line students according to the attached schedule and to provide all students with equal opportunities to complete the program.