

**Report of a Follow-Up Survey Visit
Quest College in San Antonio, Texas
Vocational Nursing Education Program**

Summary of Request:

Consider the report of the follow-up survey visit to the Quest College Vocational Nursing (VN) Education Program in San Antonio, Texas, on August 26, 2014. The survey visit was conducted by Board Lead Education Consultant Janice I. Hooper, PhD, RN, FRE and Education Consultant Virginia D. Ayars, EdD, MS, RN.

Historical Perspective:

- The Quest College (formerly Career Quest) VN Education Program was established in 2010 and graduated the first cohort of eight (8) students in April 2011.
- Quest College is accredited by the Council on Occupational Education.
- The NCLEX-PN® examination pass rates for the past three (3) years are provided in the following table:

NCLEX Examination Year	BON Approval Status	NCLEX-PN® Examination Pass Rate	Number of First Time Candidates (Passed/Total)
2013	Full with Warning (April 2014 Board Meeting)	44.59%	33/74
2012	Full	37.50% (Self-Study Report)	15/40
2011	Initial	87.50%	7/8

- The program submitted a Self-Study Report in 2013 due to the 2012 NCLEX-PN® examination pass rate of 37.50%. Although the program implemented measures to improve the performance of students on the national licensing examination, the NCLEX-PN® examination pass rate has continued to be below 80%. Self-Study Reports are required when a program experiences a one time pass rate below 80%. The annual NCLEX examination pass rates reports for VN programs are presented to the Board at the annual April meeting. Letters requiring Self-Study Reports are sent to programs following the April meeting with a due date that allows the program about two (2) months for development.
- The Quest College VN Self-Study Report was received in the Board office in July 2013. The report identified the following factors that may have led to the below 80% NCLEX-PN® examination pass rate: (1) an increase in enrollment numbers; (2) a turnover in faculty members; and (3) the need for more standardization throughout the curriculum. Corrective measures were implemented, including: (1) institution of standardized test banks; (2) establishment of clinical grading rubrics; (3) removal of extra credit; (4) establishment of a student re-entry policy; (5) standardization of the faculty orientation process; (6) evaluation of faculty retention/assignments; and (7) review of curriculum.
- Seven (7) individuals have served as the VN education program director since the program began in April 2010.
- Mary Simcic, RN was appointed to the program director position in January 2014 and meets the requirements of Board Rule 214 to serve in the nursing leadership position.

- At the time of the April 2014 Board meeting, 110 students were enrolled in the program, as follows:

Day Cohort Graduation Date	Number Enrolled
June 6, 2014	12
August 29, 2014	12
November 21, 2014	20
March 17, 2014	14
Total Day Enrollment	58

Evening Cohort Graduation Date	Number Enrolled
May 16, 2014	19
September 15, 2014	11
November 21, 2014	9
May 16, 2015	13
Total Evening Enrollment	52

- During the April 2014 Board meeting, the approval status of Quest College was changed from Full to Full with Warning due to the 2012 and 2013 NCLEX-PN® pass rates.
- The April 2014 Board Order restricted the program from enrolling more than the April 2014 total enrollment (110 students).
- The enrollment has been maintained at less than 110 students. On September 16, 2014 the actual enrollment was 68 students, as identified in the following table:

Day Cohort Graduation Date	Number Enrolled
December 2, 2014	12
March 10, 2015	17
June 5, 2015	12
September 2, 2015	13
Total Day Enrollment	54

Evening Cohort Graduation Date	Number Enrolled
January 7, 2014	4
May 15, 2015	8
September 1, 2015	2
Total Evening Enrollment	14

Summary of Survey Findings (See Attachment #1):

Pros and Cons from the Survey Visit:

Pros:

- The VN Program Director is an experienced and dedicated nurse educator, having served as a faculty member at Quest College since 2009. The director's time is devoted to administration of the program with limited teaching responsibilities.
- Administration expressed support for the VN program and stated that the program fulfills a continued need for vocational nurses in the San Antonio community.
- The Program Director stated that she is supported by the administration.
- Students offered that they appreciate being enrolled in the program.
- The program of study incorporates creative methods for course delivery, including frequent communication with faculty, face-to-face instruction, student centered learning activities, and utilization of simulation.
- All clinical learning experiences are faculty supervised with hands-on direct patient care and use of preceptors in clinical settings. The program utilizes simulation to prepare students for clinical practice and for remediation.

- The program utilizes a part-time clinical coordinator to assist with clinical learning experiences and to liaison with clinical sites.
- The program maintains active contracts with a variety of clinical affiliating agencies that provide rich clinical learning experiences.
- VN graduates are able to obtain employment in long term care agencies, clinics, and some acute care hospitals.
- The administration, the program director, and faculty have implemented corrective measures as identified in the 2013 Self-Study report.

Cons:

- For the past two (2) years, the program has experienced frequent turnover in leadership and faculty.
- NCLEX-PN® examination pass rates have been below 80% for first-time test-takers for the 2012 and 2013 examination years.

Rationales for staff recommendation:

During the discussion at the April 2014 Board meeting related to the five vocational nursing education programs that were placed on Full Approval with Warning, questions arose about whether increasing enrollments factored into the pass rates. The Board required that the affected programs restrict enrollments until Board Staff could conduct follow-up survey visits to reassess the situation in each program. Board Staff determined that each program should receive individual consideration in respect to future admissions and total enrollments.

Staff Recommendation:

Move to accept the report of the survey visit to the Quest College Vocational Nursing Education Program in San Antonio, Texas, and impose the conditions/requirements in the Board Order (See letter and Board Order in Attachment #2).

**Summary of Survey Visit
Quest College in San Antonio, Texas
Vocational Nursing Education Program**

Purpose of Survey visit: Follow-up visit related to April 2014 Board Order

Date of Visit: August 26, 2014

Board Staff Conducting Visit: Janice I. Hooper, PhD, RN, FRE and Virginia D. Ayars, EdD, MS, RN

Board Staff met with:

- Jeanne Martin, Chairman of the Board
- Heinz A. Huhn, Chief Operating Officer
- Gregg Falcon, President
- Mary Simcic, RN, Program Director
- Kay Pendleton, RN, Assistant Program Director/Instructor
- Sheree Otis-Sullivan, MSN, RN, Clinical Coordinator/Instructor
- Nicole Hammons, BSN, RN, Instructor
- Craig Cabral, RN, Instructor
- Santiago Lara, LVN, Instructor
- Natasha DeLeon, LVN, Instructor
- Twelve (12) VN Students

Board Staff:

- Reviewed the curriculum and all syllabi;
- Reviewed the Student Handbook and Faculty Handbook;
- Reviewed exams, assignments, and clinical evaluation tools;
- Reviewed clinical affiliation agreements;
- Toured facilities housing the nursing program;
- Held initial conference with administration;
- Met with Program Director;
- Met with faculty members;
- Interviewed students;
- Conducted exit interview with administration and program director.

Summary of Findings:

Findings Related to Administration:

- Quest College administration expressed strong support for the VN program and articulated that appropriate resources will be made available to ensure student and program success.
- Administration stated that they value the VN program's role in providing safe, competent vocational nurses to the San Antonio community.
- Upper level administration office at the San Antonio campus, therefore VN program needs could be timely considered and addressed.
- Mary Simcic, RN, has served as director of the VN program since January 2014, having been a faculty member since 2009.
- Former VN Program Director, Angela Miley, MS, BSN, RN serves as a consultant for the Quest College VN Program and is available to mentor Ms. Simcic in the nurse administrator role.
- Ms. Simcic has implemented many changes since assuming the program director role, including conducting a critical evaluation of the curriculum, instructional methods, and faculty performances.

Findings Related to Program of Study:

- The VN program offers two tracks: a full-time day program was designed to be completed in 12 months; and a part-time evening program, initiated in 2012, to be completed in 16 months.
- The Assistant Director of Nursing oversees the Day and Evening programs.
- The organization of the curriculum is based on sequential learning, with instruction during the first level providing the groundwork for the program.
- The program of study includes all required content, and is logically organized from simple to complex. The program of study is designed to ensure students are competent in skills prior to entering the clinical setting.
- The *Differentiated Essential Competencies (DECs) (2010)* have been fully incorporated into the current curriculum.
- The teaching model is based upon face-to-face classes. Virtual clinical experiences on DVD are also utilized.
- The Quest College VN Program utilizes standardized testing as part of the admission process. ATI is incorporated throughout the program and is utilized for assessment and remediation purposes.
- Students expressed that syllabi and instructions are adequate/effective.

Findings Related to Faculty:

- The director and six full-time faculty; two part-time faculty members carry out the VN instruction. Current faculty have been employed from a period of three months to five years.
- Turnover rate for faculty has been an ongoing issue. Ms. Simcic has worked diligently since she assumed the director role to assemble a cadre of dedicated VN faculty members. The distinct characteristics of each faculty member contribute to a diverse, robust faculty team.
- The faculty members stated that they receive strong support from the one another as well as the director. They articulated satisfaction with their positions as nurse educators and plan to obtain further education in the discipline.

- The faculty members expressed excitement about methods of instruction typically using group and interactive activities and visuals.
- The faculty members stated that their current workload is reasonable, but full. The faculty members stated that they occasionally take work home to complete.
- Both the director and the faculty members expressed interest in attending the Texas Association of Vocational Nurse Educators Conference annually, as well as being able to participate in professional development activities.
- Monthly faculty meetings are held as needed. Board required faculty policies are in place with files providing evidence that policies related to faculty qualifications and evaluations are followed.

Findings Related to Students:

- The VN program admits eight cohorts of students each year, every 12 weeks for the Day Program and every 16 weeks for the Evening Program.
- According to the director, the program has the capacity to admit up to 30 students for Days and 30 students for Evenings.
- The director states that attrition rates typically range from 6-8%.
- Twelve (12) students were available to interview.
- Students reported they enrolled in the VN program because of location in their local community, the program reputation, and the ability to complete a nursing program in one year.
- Students expressed that they felt that employment opportunities were available to new graduates locally in long term care, clinics, rehabilitation facilities, and other healthcare settings in the area.
- Students cited the richness and variety of clinical experiences as being the highlight of the program.
- Students agreed that the program of study and methods of instruction are effective. They stated that the classroom and skills lab instruction prepared them well for clinical experiences.
- Student policies are in place.
- Students receive required information in their initial orientation verbally as well as in a handbook. Students commented that they feel that most of the current faculty are engaged teachers, approachable, and committed to their success. They enjoy group activities in the classroom and the interactive lecture style.
- The students stated that they want to learn and are willing to devote the requisite time and energy to being successful in the VN program.
- Students shared that the turnover in program directors and faculty members has been unsettling. They were unsure of the chain of command.

Findings Related to Clinical Learning Experiences:

- The VN program has active clinical contracts with six affiliating agencies which provide sound clinical opportunities for the curriculum.
- The faculty provide responsible supervision in all clinical experiences. Board required ratios are maintained for these experiences.

- The clinical experiences are scheduled to match or follow related didactic content in the classroom.
- The clinical evaluation tools demonstrate progression across the program and are used for formative and summative evaluations.

Findings Related to Facilities, Resources, and Services:

- An array of student services is located on campus. There is a library on campus. Students also have access to full-text nursing journals through the library located on campus, and online journals are in the process of being acquired.
- Computer labs/resources are available on campus. Exams are administered in a computer lab in the nursing building. Students can also access various computer programs from home. A remediation program is available on campus.
- The director has a private office in close proximity to the administrative assistant, faculty offices, and classrooms.
- Faculty member offices are housed in a large fully equipped room, containing individual work spaces.
- Adequate restrooms are located in the nursing building.
- The four VN classrooms are spacious, comfortable and adequately equipped large screen TV's, laptops, and tables and chairs that encourage group activities.
- Several high-fidelity mannequins are based within the skills lab area.
- The VN program has one full-time administrative assistant.
- Files are locked and located in a secure area in the program director's office.

Findings Related to Records and Reports:

- The program has an adequate Total Program Evaluation Plan (TPE) in place.

DRAFT LETTER

October 23, 2014

Mary Simcic, RN, Director
Quest College
Vocational Nursing Education Program
5368 Fredericksburg Rd., Suite 400
San Antonio, TX 78229

Dear Ms. Simcic:

At the October 23-24, 2014 meeting, members of the Texas Board of Nursing (Board) considered the report of the August 26, 2014 survey visit to the Quest College Vocational Nursing Education Program in San Antonio, Texas. It was the decision of the Board to accept the report of the survey visit and impose the conditions/requirements in the attached Board Order.

Requirements are 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 offer assistance, please contact Board Staff at virginia.ayars@bon.texas.gov or (512) 305-7660.

Sincerely,

Katherine Thomas, MN, RN, FAAN
Executive Director

copy: Jeanne Martin, Quest College President
Texas Workforce Commission
Council on Occupational Education

BEFORE THE TEXAS BOARD OF NURSING

In the Matter of:

Quest College
Vocational Nursing Education Program
in San Antonio, Texas

ORDER OF THE BOARD

A public meeting of the Texas Board of Nursing, hereinafter referred to as the Board, was held on October 23, 2014, 333 Guadalupe, Tower II, Room 225, Austin, Texas, to consider the report of the follow-up survey visit to the Quest College Vocational Nursing Education in San Antonio, Texas, pursuant to Section 301.157, Texas Occupations Code and 22 Tex. Admin. Code Chapter 214.

After review and due consideration of the filed materials, as well as the presentation by representatives from Quest College in San Antonio, Texas, and other interested parties, if any, the Board hereby ACCEPTS the survey visit report and imposes the following conditions/requirements:

Requirements:

1. The program shall submit for Board Staff approval an enrollment plan considering the number of qualified nursing faculty and available qualified student candidates, and clinical resources. The enrollment plan will be effective upon Board Staff approval until April 2015. The Board will reconsider any future changes to the enrollment plan following the determination of the 2014 NCLEX-PN® examination pass rate. The enrollment plan may be submitted to Board Staff no later than November 15, 2014.
2. The program shall provide evaluation data that indicate the effectiveness of the proposed corrective measures outlined in the Self-Study Report to Board Staff no later than January 1, 2015.

Entered this 23rd day of October, 2014

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