

**Consideration of Change in Approval Status  
From Full Approval to Full Approval with Warning  
Vista College in El Paso, Texas  
Vocational Nursing Education Program**

**Summary of Request:**

Consider the proposed change in approval status for the Vista College Vocational Nursing (VN) Education Program in El Paso, Texas, from Full Approval to Full Approval with Warning based upon the 2019 NCLEX-PN® examination pass rate, findings in the 2019 Self-Study Report, and areas for improvement for alignment with Rule 214.

**Historical Perspective:**

- Vista College was initially accredited by the Council on Occupational Education (COE) in 1989. COE conducted a reaffirmation survey visit in Fall 2019; Vista College is awaiting COE's final letter of approval.
- The Vista College VN Education Program has been in operation since 2004. The main campus is located in El Paso with extension campuses in Beaumont and Killeen.
- Tami Little, DNP, RN, CNE, is the Director of Nursing and has served in this position since August 2015.
- The NCLEX-PN® examination pass rates for the past five years are included in the table below:

<b>NCLEX Examination Year</b>	<b>BON Approval Status</b>	<b>NCLEX-PN® Examination Pass Rate</b>	<b>Number of First Time Candidates (Passed/Total)</b>
2019	Full	77.36%	164/212
2018	Full	76.33%	129/169
2017	Full	83.40%	201/241
2016	Full	87.93%	204/232
2015	Full	86.58%	129/149

- Due to the 2018 NCLEX-PN® examination pass rate of 76.33%, the Program Director and faculty were required to submit a Self-Study Report (SSR) in 2019 that would evaluate

factors that may have contributed to the graduates' performance on the NCLEX-PN® examination and a description of the corrective measures to be implemented.

- The Education Consultants conducted a conference call with the Program Director and faculty members on May 15, 2019, to discuss the process of developing the SSR. A comprehensive, in-depth SSR was received in the Board office on July 19, 2019.
- The Program Director and faculty members identified multiple factors in the SSR that may have contributed to the NCLEX-PN® pass rate falling below 80% as well as corrective measures to improve success, including the following activities:
  - review and revise the readmission process;
  - timely identify at-risk students;
  - strengthen faculty onboarding;
  - implement a formalized mentoring program to pair novice faculty with experienced faculty;
  - evaluate the current curriculum to determine alignment with the NCLEX test plan;
  - develop a comprehensive simulation program;
  - secure additional clinical affiliations to ensure a variety of rich clinical learning experiences; and
  - revise clinical evaluation tools.
- The Vista College VN Program has provided a response letter to be included with the Board report (See Attachment #1).

**Rationale for Recommendations:**

Rule 214.4(c)(3)(A) states: “A warning may be issued to a program when the pass rate of first-time NCLEX-PN® candidates ... is less than 80% for two (2) consecutive years...”

The Education Guideline for writing a Self-Study Report requires that “The effects of the corrective measures should be evaluated as a part of the Total Program Evaluation Plan”.

**Staff Recommendation:**

Move to change the approval status for the Vista College Vocational Nursing Education Program in El Paso, Texas, from Full Approval to Full Approval with Warning based upon the 2019 NCLEX-PN® examination pass rate, findings in the 2019 Self-Study Report, and areas for improvement for alignment with Rule 214, and impose the conditions/requirements in the attached letter and Board Order (See Attachment #2).

## Self-Study Update Summary

*June 15, 2020*

The 2018 NCLEX-PN pass rate for Vista College's first time testers was below the benchmark of 80%. The program completed a self-study and the formal report was accepted by the Texas Board of Nursing on August 2, 2019. Upon acceptance, Board staff requested an update on each of the corrective measures which was accepted by Board staff in January 2020.

The 2019 NCLEX-PN pass rate for Vista College's first time testers was also below the benchmark of 80%. This document provides a summary of identified concerns from the original self-study report and an update on corrective measures.

Through the self-study process faculty identified several factors which may have contributed to a decrease in NCLEX-PN pass rates. The following factors were determined to be significant.

- Minimal support for students reentering the program and/or retaking courses
- Policy leniency during curriculum transition
- Inexperienced nursing instructors
- Inadequate student to full-time faculty ratio
- Inconsistent implementation of faculty policies and performance management processes
- Limited data to evaluate current curriculum and NCLEX-PN outcomes
- Inadequate Exit HESI examination data
- No comprehensive testing policy
- Inconsistent clinical learning experiences
- No formal simulation program to facilitate student learning of core concepts

Nursing faculty and leaders determined actions to address each contributing factor. Corrective measures and outcomes-to-date are summarized.

### *Minimal support for students reentering the program and/or retaking courses*

- Revised re-entry process provides Nursing Program Directors with direct contact to at-risk students before returning to the program. Student success plans for each reentry student are designed in collaboration with the student and include check points throughout the term.
- Grade and attendance tracking continues to provide essential data on at-risk students. The tracking tool is used to report at-risk students during bi-weekly retention meetings, initiate the S.A.V.E. process as needed, and track faculty advisements with student related to grades, attendance and behavior.

### *Policy leniency during curriculum transition*

- The old curriculum has been fully taught out.
- An evaluation of student appeals and grievances was added to the Student section of the program's systematic evaluation plan with activities scheduled to collect and

analyze data each year. The first evaluation occurred in April 2020 and focused on student and program consequences from appeal actions during 2019.

- Outcomes from the appeal analysis include new guidelines for appeal decisions and success plans for students retaking courses.

#### *Inexperienced nursing instructors*

- A peer mentoring program was implemented with a few instructors in January 2020 and five instructors participated in the program. Additionally, four new instructors were hired for the summer 2020 term and were assigned a peer mentor.

#### *Inadequate student to full-time faculty ratio -*

- Additional full-time and part-time faculty were hired for the spring 2020 term as well as the summer 2020 term.
- Faculty ratios have improved since the 2019 summer term, with El Paso's student to full-time instructor ratios decreasing from 37:1 to 22:1 and Beaumont's ratios decreasing from 25:1 to 23:1.

#### *Inconsistent implementation of faculty policies and performance management processes*

- All nursing instructors, Nursing Program Directors and campus-based Directors of Education attended a program-wide faculty meeting in January 2020. During the meeting, faculty policies and expectations were reviewed as well as content related to student resources and at-risk student processes.
- An accountability program was initiated to more effectively manage nursing faculty and program outcomes. The program improves Director of Education supervision of Nursing Program Directors and engages Campus Directors in oversight of the program. Training and operational tools were provided to campus leaders.
- A Nursing Program Director was hired in May for the Beaumont program. The new director is actively engaged in the four-month onboarding and training program, and will incrementally take responsibility for program activities over the summer term. The El Paso position remains open with several candidates interviewed.

#### *Limited data to evaluate current curriculum and NCLEX-PN outcomes*

- In April, nursing faculty performed a mini self-study to evaluate the curriculum and 2019 NCLEX-PN pass rates.
- Outcomes from this evaluation include opportunities to
  - improve curriculum content focused on Basic Care and Comfort, Pharmacological Therapies, and Reduction of Risk Potential;
  - enhance instructional practices to minimize gaps between teaching and student learning; and
  - more effectively evaluate student learning through the collaborative exam process.

#### *Inadequate Exit HESI examination data*

- Faculty development related to HESI assessment reports was scheduled with face-to-face training at each campus during the spring 2020 term. Unfortunately this training was postponed due to travel restrictions secondary to COVID-19. An alternative to face-to-face training at each campus is being designed and will hopefully be available for faculty this summer.

#### *No comprehensive testing policy*

- Nursing faculty, via the Policy Taskforce, designed a comprehensive testing policy with specific guidelines for unit and final examinations. The policy includes expectations for test blueprints, exam development, question requirements, student study guides, post-exam reviews, and item analysis.
- A collaborative process for the development and implementation of standardized unit and final exams for all courses across all campuses was also initiated. Faculty responses to the process have been positive. Participating instructors express a greater understanding of taxonomies and the importance of teaching and assessing at the same level.

#### *Inconsistent clinical learning experiences*

- The Corporate Nursing Clinical Coordinator secured new clinical affiliations to replace experiences at facilities with lower quality patient care.
- Faculty development focused on facilitating student learning in clinical settings, providing formative feedback, and documenting evaluations of student performance was provided.
- Several virtual clinical products are currently being used to meet course competencies and enhance clinical judgment, care coordination, professional communication and safe patient-centered care.

#### *No formal simulation program*

- A Simulation Taskforce was established in September 2019 with faculty representatives from all campuses.
- Taskforce members participated in professional development activities during the fall term including National League for Nursing Simulation Innovation Resource Center (SIRC) courses and Laerdal's Simulation User Network (SUN) conference.
- The Taskforce continues to work on development of a comprehensive simulation program consisting of a simulation handbook with policies for students and instructors, simulation scenarios for all clinical course and standardized faculty development for all instructors who will facilitate simulation.

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, many of the April 2020 graduates were delayed testing dates even though scheduling occurred immediately after graduation. To keep graduates engaged and studying for the licensure examination, nursing faculty implemented NCLEX-PN preparation sessions in mid-May for graduates from all campuses. Sessions, facilitated via Zoom, are

scheduled twice a week on Wednesdays at 7:00pm and Fridays at 12:00pm. Each session focuses on a different section of the NCLEX-PN test plan and includes a review of content as well as test taking and studying techniques.

Opportunities to take a standardized predictor exam have also been scheduled for June, July and August. These exams will be used to identify areas of opportunity for graduates who have not yet tested. Instructors will adapt review session content based on predictor exam outcomes to effectively meet graduate needs. Ongoing support for graduates is also provided by the Career Service department who connects with graduates by phone each week. Hopefully, continuous engagement with graduates will better prepare those who have been forced to wait for an NCLEX-PN test date.

DRAFT LETTER

July 23, 2020

Tami Little, DNP, RN, CNE, Corporate Director  
Vocational Nursing Education Program  
Vista College  
300 N. Coit Road, Suite 1400  
Richardson, TX 75080

Dear Dr. Little:

At the July 23-24, 2020 meeting, members of the Texas Board of Nursing (Board) considered the approval status for the Vista College Vocational Nursing Education Program in El Paso, Texas, based upon the NCLEX-PN® examination pass rate for 2019, findings in the 2019 Self-Study Report, and areas for improvement for alignment with Rule 214.

Based upon the discussion and review of information, it was the decision of the Board to change the approval status for the Vista College Vocational Nursing Education Program in El Paso, Texas, from Full Approval to Full Approval with Warning and impose the conditions/requirements in the attached Board Order.

If you have any questions or if we may offer assistance, please contact Board Staff at [Virginia.ayars@bon.texas.gov](mailto:Virginia.ayars@bon.texas.gov) or 512-305-7660.

Sincerely,

Katherine A. Thomas, MN, RN, FAAN  
Executive Director

Copy: Jim Tolbert, CEO, Vista College

**BEFORE THE TEXAS BOARD OF NURSING**

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**ORDER OF THE BOARD**

In the Matter of  
Vista College  
Vocational Nursing Education Program  
El Paso, Texas

A public meeting of the Texas Board of Nursing, hereinafter referred to as the Board, was held on July 23, 2020, 333 Guadalupe, Tower II, Room 225, Austin, Texas, to consider the approval status for the Vista College Vocational Nursing Education Program in El Paso, Texas, pursuant to Section 301.157, Texas Occupations Code and 22 Tex. Admin. Code Chapter 214, based upon the NCLEX-PN® examination pass rate for 2019, findings in the 2019 Self-Study Report, and areas for improvement for alignment with Rule 214.

After review and due consideration of the materials presented by Staff and filed by Vista College in El Paso, Texas, the Board hereby CHANGES the approval status for the Vista College Vocational Nursing Education Program in El Paso, Texas, from FULL APPROVAL to FULL APPROVAL WITH WARNING and imposes the following conditions/requirements:

1. In accordance with Rule 214.4(a)(3)(A), a program survey visit will be conducted by Board Staff during 2020.
2. An evaluation of the effectiveness of the corrective measures outlined in the 2019 Self-Study Report is to be submitted by the program to Board Staff no later than September 1, 2020, per Education Guideline 3.2.1.a.

Entered this 23<sup>rd</sup> day of July, 2020

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Katherine A. Thomas, MN, RN, FAAN  
Executive Director  
On Behalf of the Texas Board of Nursing