

VOCATIONAL NURSING
INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAM REVIEW

January 2003

Instructional Program Review Committee

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Section 1: Statement of Purpose

The mission of the Vocational Nursing Program (VNP) is to provide quality education in an environment in which students of varying age and diversified culture are able to develop the values, skills, and attitudes consistent with the nursing profession and the health care needs of the community. The Program will provide a milieu to promote caring behaviors, critical thinking skills, and competent nursing care. Site based instruction and distance technology will be employed to increase student accessibility.

Purpose

The Mission Statement reflects the purpose of the VNP to prepare graduates (a) that will be successful in passing the licensure exam to become Licensed Vocational Nurses and (b) that are competent entry-level practitioners of vocational nursing. Graduates must be able to utilize critical thinking skills and the nursing process as a basis for providing safe, effective individualized care to clients, families, and communities.

Accessibility

The student population of the VNP reflects diversity in age, ethnicity, educational background, and geographic location. The curriculum design targets the diversified learning needs of the student population. The accessibility of nursing education is increased with the use of interactive video technology. An IVC program is currently in place in Fredericksburg, TX, a community in the Austin Community College (ACC) service area that has demonstrated need.

Life Long Learning

The experiences in the VNP provide a foundation for continuing education. Graduates of the VNP are able to bridge to the RN license through the ADN mobility track program, programs offering a BSN (UT Health Science Center in San Antonio), and online programs offering LVN to RN programs.

Section 2: Vision Summary

Currently, the local community has increased nursing needs in many settings and predictions indicate an unprecedented shortage of nurses in the next decade. A maturing workforce, decreased numbers of applicants to nursing schools, and an exodus of nurses from the profession fuels the shortage.

The VNP must continue to meet the needs of the community and the students by providing programs that are accessible, affordable, and flexible. It is essential to have resources that support faculty and students by creating an environment that is conducive to the creativity of faculty and students, promotes education that is evidence-based, and results in safe, quality care.

New Health Science Building

The first step in enhancing the nursing program will be the move to the new Health Sciences Building in the fall of 2003. This move will enable the programs to increase student accessibility to the clinical practice lab and the faculty to develop simulated clinical scenarios that will increase the student's critical thinking skills. Resources required include increased numbers of computers in the lab and the purchase or development of additional computer assisted instructional programs. Computerized simulation models provide students opportunities to make "real life" decisions in a safe environment.

Online Programming

In addition to maintaining and enhancing the interactive video classroom (IVC program) in Fredericksburg, the next step to improving flexibility and accessibility to the nursing program is the development of the vocational nursing

theory courses in a web-based format. Resources needed to move toward online programming include:

1. Faculty training in the use of the technology.
2. Release time to enable faculty to develop courses in online format.
3. Computers, telecommunications equipment, and software necessary to support the online environment.
4. Ongoing technical support for faculty and students.
5. Increased number of faculty.

Support Services

Student support services are vital to the success of the vocational nursing student. A minimum of one full time Health Science tutor and a full time nursing counselor (to be utilized by both nursing programs) is critical to student retention.

Curriculum

Major curriculum changes occurred with implementation of the Workforce Education Course Manual (WECM) in fall of 2000. The VNP has an ongoing systematic plan of evaluation with revisions made as indicated. The faculty will examine whether changes in prerequisite courses are needed to provide a broader scope for graduates in the practice setting. With the increasing Hispanic population of this community, the introduction of a “Spanish for Healthcare Providers” as a program requirement may be considered. Content related to bioterrorism will be added to the curriculum.

Articulation

To facilitate the articulation of VNP graduates to the mobility track program, both programs will work together to better align their curriculums to

prevent repetition of comparable coursework. Beginning a dialogue with the University of Texas at Austin and Texas Tech for an LVN to BSN articulation will provide the VNP graduate with increased accessibility to advanced educational opportunities.

Section 3: Identification of Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT)

The faculty, students both current and former, and an industry representative completed a SWOT analysis for the Vocational Nursing Program. The group surmised the following strengths, weaknesses, threats and opportunities for the program.

Strengths:

1. The principal strength identified by the SWOT participants was the faculty. Faculty knowledge and experience, from both full-time and adjunct members were the most highly recognized qualities in the faculty. Faculty diversity was also noted as a particular strength, citing the diversity in age, background, experiences, and clinical specialties. The willingness and abilities of the faculty to think “outside the box”, use new and creative teaching strategies and continue to gather new and up-to-date learning materials were also cited as evidence of an expert faculty. The faculty are involved in professional and state organizations, as well as community service all of which serve to broaden the experiences the faculty bring to the learning environment.
2. The next most recognized strength of the Vocational Nursing Program was the curriculum. The Vocational Nursing Program at Austin Community College is one of three Vocational Nursing Programs accredited in Texas by the National League for Nursing Accrediting Commission (NLNAC). The ACC-VNP has been NLNAC accredited for the past eight years. NLNAC accreditation is especially of note since

- there are over 100 VN programs in Texas. The SWOT participants felt strongly that the curriculum is innovative, going above the required competencies for VN programs: Differentiated Entry Level Competencies of Graduates of Texas Nursing Programs and SCANS. Additionally, the curriculum is based on an organizing conceptual framework: each level building a firm foundation for subsequent learning. The final semester culminates with management and leadership content that provide a springboard for our students to ascend the ladder of professional nursing.
3. The Vocational Nursing Program also enjoys excellent leadership. The Program Coordinator and the Dean of Allied Health Sciences have exemplified visionary leadership as well as support for the faculty. The Program Coordinator, both past and present, has always been approachable and open to faculty input.
 4. The fourth strength identified by the SWOT participants was community need for the Vocational Nursing Program. The Austin-area community views the program as a vital need, especially during a national nursing shortage. ACC Vocational Nurses are sought after employees by community hospitals, clinics, and area physicians' offices. The Austin-area community also supports the Vocational Nursing Program in a number of ways. The ACC Vocational Nursing Program is one of the programs that Capital IDEA underwrites for students. Capital IDEA is a coalition of community based organizations and employers whose mission is to provide unemployed/underemployed Central Texas Adults access to

economically self sufficient growth jobs through long term training and support services.

5. A caring faculty also strengthens the program. The SWOT participants described the faculty as dedicated to students and to the college. The faculty models caring behaviors (a curriculum thread) in their relationships with each other and the students. The faculty is enthusiastic, competent and open to student needs.
6. Finally, the program enjoys student success as a strength. The Vocational Nursing Program pass rate on the NCLEX-PN for 2000 was 94% at RVS (and 100% at FBG), 100% in 2001, and currently 96%.

Weaknesses:

1. The number one weakness identified by the group was student attrition. Attrition occurs in the VN Program for a multiplicity of reasons. Students in the VN program come with a diversity of educational backgrounds with diverse learning needs. Many students have complex life situations requiring counselors to assist with resources. Students are lost due to academic failure at different points in their progression.
2. The second identified weakness was lack of student financial support. Most students entering the VN program must maintain full-time jobs while going to school. The rigorous curriculum presents challenges to students who cannot devote the majority of their time to studies.
3. Another weakness identified by SWOT participants was technology problems. A frustration for both students and faculty is problems with the LXR on-line testing program. Technology glitches during exams are

- particularly vexing. Problems also exist in the VTEL system when transmitting to students in Fredericksburg. Some days, alternatives to faculty instruction due to failure of the VTEL system are required.
4. Finally, faculty–related concerns were identified as a weakness in the program. Concerns related to faculty workload and demands on faculty time were cited. Faculty feel overwhelmed with demands on time such as extra events, meetings and committee work, grading and the heavy clinical schedule. Some SWOT participants felt the curriculum creates an increased workload for the faculty detracting from foundational instruction. Other concerns were a maturing faculty, faculty turnover and changing teaching assignments.

Opportunities:

1. The VN program enjoys a collaborative relationship with healthcare institutions and schools in the Austin-area. Many clinical agencies have been willing/able to increase slots for clinical placements to accommodate our students. The two major healthcare networks in the area collaborate with us regarding grant opportunities for students as well as employment during school for the students. Collaboration is occurring with the Austin Independent School District through outreach programs to increase awareness of nursing and opportunities at ACC.
2. The SWOT participants identified Capital IDEA as an opportunity. Capital IDEA provides students with access to the VN program that might not otherwise be able to enter. Through Fall 2002, 25-30% of each new class of VN students participate through the Capital IDEA program.

3. Community service opportunities and community events are opportunities for the VN program to increase visibility of the program in the community as well as instill the value of community to the students. Community planners are beginning to see the VN program as a resource for health fairs, health screenings and educational offerings in the community.
4. Another opportunity identified is the increase in funding opportunities for VN students. More grant money is available for nursing education than ever before.
5. Finally, community need for nurses is an opportunity for the VN program. National media attention is highlighting a nursing shortage. Many people are looking for more secure careers and nursing is an attractive alternative as stable employment with substantial opportunity to advance. The Austin community is also suffering from a shortage of nurses. The community is responding by increasing demand for graduates and employing graduates in non-traditional areas.

Threats:

1. The biggest threat identified by the SWOT participants was a decrease in the size of the applicant pool. Fewer young people are choosing nursing as a career. Other professions are attracting qualified applicants to their programs. Jobs that pay more and are less labor intensive are more attractive to potential students.
2. Another threat to the VN program is the applicants' qualifications. The program has seen a decline in number and qualifications of applicants in

recent years. By trying to increase class size, the applicant pool is depleted quickly.

3. The nursing profession can also be viewed as a threat to the program. The reality of the acute care environment, low job satisfaction, and the tendency for nurses to “eat their young” are all threats that could impact the future of the program. Low wages for LVNs, unrealistic expectations of our graduates also threaten future applicants. The trend of hiring nurses trained in other countries (largely due to the current nursing shortage) also is a threat to the program.
4. Finally, Austin Community College budget concerns and community support for the college pose a threat to the program. The SWOT participants felt fiscal community support for the college overall is in jeopardy, putting the program at risk as a result.

Section 4: Summary Analysis of the Indicators of Effectiveness: Need

Community Need

Ongoing requests for increased number of graduates by the healthcare networks in the Austin-area demonstrates community need. The demand for nurses continues to rise, while the supply of nurses in on the decline. In August of 2001, the two major healthcare systems, St. David's Healthcare Partnership and Seton Healthcare Network had vacancies for 100 LVN's. Small businesses and long term care facilities are also experiencing a shortage of nurses. The Texas Workforce Commission projects the need for 220 new nursing positions each year until 2008

Enrollment Trends

	FY 1997	FY 1998	FY 1999	FY 2000	FY 2001
Enrollments	775	1,024	812	445	719
Sections	53	74	61	39	77

Enrollment has shown an increase from FY 2000 to 2001. The enrollment trends above reflect the trends found through out the state in VN programs.

Outcomes

Degrees Conferred

Year	# Receiving Vocational Nursing Certificates
1999	49
2000	32
2001	47
2002	42

Placement

The VN program exceeds the THECB requirement of 15 graduates in 3 years along with successful placement (at least 85%) of those graduates.

Table: Placements

	1996-1999
Graduates	130
Placements	125
Placement Rate	96.2%

Graduate surveys, conducted six months after completion, indicate that their employment is related to their training.

Table: Employed in Nursing

Graduating Class	Percentage employed in nursing.
August 2000	100%
August 2001	100%
December 2001	92%

Competition from other institutions

Currently, there are no other colleges in the Austin area offering a vocational nursing certificate. The number of applicants interested in vocational nursing has increased over the last two years. Competition for resources (classroom and clinical space) occurs with the associate degree program. Clinical placements must also be coordinated with the UT School of Nursing. As the RN programs continue to increase enrollment, creative clinical placement

strategies by all programs are necessary to ensure students have opportunities to meet clinical objectives.

Labor market opportunities

From the US Dept. of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics: The US Department of Labor reports by 2010 the LPN employment rate will grow. The Dept. of Labor cites an increased need for LVNs in long-term care and home health care as the general population ages and the number of persons with functional disabilities increases. The Dept of Labor also projects a possible decrease in LPN positions in the acute care hospital setting. However, the positions are simply shifted to physician offices and clinics as healthcare services expand outside the traditional acute care hospital setting.

Section 4: Summary Analysis of the Indicators of Effectiveness: Cost
“Within the context of the College’s mission, is the cost of the program justified?”

Budget Analysis

According to the revenues versus cost report for FY '01, the program's expenditures exceeded the budget. The net deficit was reported to be \$529,160. Items in which expenditures exceeded the proposed budget allocation were full time faculty salaries and departmental expenses. Revenue per contact hour was \$6.22 and expenditures per contact hour were \$13.32 for a net deficit of \$7.10.

Comparative Program Costs

The net deficit in the VNP is comparable to the associate degree program, but higher than several other health science programs with lower enrollments. The FT faculty salaries represented the area that was above the budgeted amount; however, adjunct salaries were less than budgeted. Experienced faculty

are vital to the integrity of the program and to ensure graduates that are qualified to provide safe, effective nursing care. The Texas Board of Vocational Nurse Examiners and clinical affiliation agreements limit the number of students per instructor in the clinical area to ten students. In order to maintain this faculty to student ratio, the program's cost is higher compared to academic programs.

Student evaluations consistently indicate a need to update skills lab equipment to be comparable to industry standards. Increasing numbers of students increases the cost of this equipment, supplies, and faculty: the VNP budget has not had increased allocations for equipment. In fact, for FY'03, there were budget cuts.

The Mission Statement of ACC and the VNP offers a pledge to assess and understand the needs of the communities served, and to deliver educational programs and services that meet those needs in the most effective manner. Although the VNP incurs costs greater than revenues generated, it is meeting an essential community need.

Section 4: Summary Analysis of the Indicators of Effectiveness:

Program Effectiveness: Student Achievement

Course Completion Rates

Fall 2000 was the first semester of the WECM curriculum. The following table reflects the percentage of students in the WECM curriculum who achieved successful grades (A, B, C or S).

Table: A,B,C,S Rates for Courses

	Fall 2000	Spring 2001	Summer 2001	Fall 2001	Spring 2001
Level I	97%	99.4%		76%	83.7%
Level II		90.8%	92.7%		97.1%
Level III			100%	96%	
Level IV				96%	95%

Program (Certificate) Completion

Degrees Conferred

Year	# Receiving Vocational Nursing Certificates
1999	49
2000	32
2001	47
2002	42

Capstone Assessment

VNSG 1219 and VNSG 2463 are the VNP capstone courses. These courses primarily focus on leadership and organizational skills. Additionally, all Level IV students take the PN version of the HESI Exit Exam. The HESI Exit Exam has extremely high correlation with the probability score and success on the NCLEX-PN. Students who score less than 85% probability of passing NCLEX meet individually with the Program Coordinator to develop a plan of action for remediation.

Licensure Pass Rates

Table: NCLEX-PN Pass Rates (On First Attempt)

Year	Pass Rate	Number of Students Testing
1997	100%	60
1998	89%	28
1999	94%	31
2000	96%	67
2001	96%	47
2002	95%	23

Comparison

These rates are well above the state averages of 91% in 1997, 90% in 1998, 89% in 1999 and 86% in 2000.

Program Effectiveness: Student Retention

Retention Rates

In fall 1997, the VN program had 4.5% D-F-W rate. This rate is higher than the college-wide rate of 0.04% for the same semester. This rate appears inflated due to the grading scale used in the VN program. In the fall 1997, a passing grade in the VNP was a 75%. To maintain high academic standards in the VN program, in January 2001, a passing grade was changed to a 77% or higher. This scale is not used for the college-wide statistics and therefore is not a comparable rate.

Table: D-F-W rates for Fall 2000- Spring 2002 (WECM courses):

Fall 2000	3%
Spring 2001	3.8%
Summer 2001	0.05%
Fall 2001	15%
Spring 2002	11.4%

Student Retention is a complex problem in the VN program. Many withdrawals are due to personal problems of the students, including financial, child rearing, and personal relationships. Multiple methods are being used to increase student retention in the VN program. A fulltime nursing tutor has been added and is available to all students, as well as a part time counselor available for nursing students only. Financial resources such as Capital IDEA have helped students considerably.

Completion rates of declared majors

Data not available

Program Effectiveness: Student Outcomes

Program completion rates

Campus	Class	Completion Rate
RVS	December 1999	79%
RVS	August 2000	45%
RVS	December 2001	88%
FBG	December 2001	88%

Employment of Graduates

For the year 1999-2000, 97.1% of VN graduates were employed within one year of graduating. According to ACC Graduate surveys, for the years 1999-2001, 83.3% of VN graduates reported their current employment is a direct result of training received from the program.

The VNP also conducts a graduate survey six months after completion.

Graduating Class	Percentage employed in nursing.
August 2000	100%
August 2001	100%
December 2001	92%

Graduation Rates

Degrees (certificates) awarded in fiscal 1999 was 49 and in fiscal year 2000, 32. The VN program exceeds the THECB requirement of 15 graduates in 3 years along with successful placement (at least 85%) of those graduates. For the years 1996-1999, the VN program had 130 graduates with 125 placements, resulting in a 96.2% placement rate.

Program Effectiveness: Access

Length of time to complete program

Data not available

Course Availability

Prerequisite courses can be taken at CYP, EVC, FBG, NRG, PIN, RGC, and RVS. The following table shows the number of students (from all locations) that were turned away due to full sections.

Fall 2002

Course	Students turned away	Students did not find another
Bio 1714	721	489
HPRS 2300	78	43

HPRS 2300 availability is a growing concern. HPRS 2300 may be taken concurrently with Level I VNSG courses. Should availability of HPRS 2300 decrease, VNSG enrollment may decrease as a result.

VNSG courses are taken at RVS or FBG. VNSG courses are offered during the day with the possibility of evening clinical hours. Courses taught in FBG are IVC courses with an instructor in FBG sharing the instruction with a RVS instructor.

Barrier to students

VNSG courses are taught during the day, making it difficult for some students to work and attend school. Also, the GPA requirement of 2.3 in prerequisite courses may pose a barrier to some students. Financial access is always a concern as well.

**Austin Community College
Vocational Nursing Program
Cost Estimate Chart**

<i>General Education Courses</i>			
<i>Courses</i>	In-District	Out-of-District	Out-of-State
BIO 1714 + Lab Fee	208.00	404.00	880.00
HPRS 1206	92.00	190.00	428.00
HPRS 2300	138.00	285.00	642.00
TOTAL	\$ 438.00	\$ 879.00	\$ 1,950.00

Vocational Nursing Courses

<i>Semester I</i>			
<i>Courses</i>	In-District	Out-of-District	Out-of-State
VNSG 1115	46.00	95.00	214.00
*VNSG 1160	46.00	95.00	214.00
VNSG 1304	138.00	285.00	642.00
VNSG 1400	184.00	380.00	856.00
VNSG 1423 + Lab Fee	208.00	404.00	880.00
TOTAL	\$ 622.00	\$ 1,259.00	\$ 2,806.00

<i>Semester II</i>			
<i>Courses</i>	In-District	Out-of-District	Out-of-State
*VNSG 1461	184.00	380.00	856.00
VNSG 1509	230.00	475.00	1070.00
VNSG 2331 + Lab Fee	162.00	309.00	666.00
TOTAL	\$ 576.00	\$ 1164.00	\$ 2592.00

<i>Semester III</i>			
<i>Courses</i>	In-District	Out-of-District	Out-of-State
VNSG 1510	230.00	475.00	1070.00
*VNSG 2462	184.00	380.00	856.00
TOTAL	\$ 414.00	\$ 855.00	\$ 1926.00

<i>Semester IV</i>			
<i>Courses</i>	In-District	Out-of-District	Out-of-State
VNSG 1219	92.00	190.00	428.00
VNSG 1230	92.00	190.00	428.00
VNSG 1234	92.00	190.00	428.00
*VNSG 2463	184.00	380.00	856.00
TOTAL	\$ 460.00	\$ 950.00	\$ 2140.00

SUBTOTAL	2,510.00	5,107.00	9,488.00
MISC COSTS (See Below)	1143.00	1143.00	1143.00
*TOTAL COST	\$ 3,653.00	\$ 6,250.00	\$ 10,631.00

Financial aid and scholarship information is given to each applicant at the Career Advising and Planning Sessions (CAPS). Students are advised of new scholarship opportunities as they become available.

Course Demand

From Fall 1999- Spring 2002 115 sections were taught at RVS and 48 taught at FBG. In the same time period, 12 RVS sections were cancelled and 4 FBG sections were cancelled.

Marketing of Program

The VN program maintains current brochures. The VN program has a user-friendly web site that can be accessed from the ACC home page. The VN program is visible in the community during community service activities, through involvement with Capital IDEA, programs to promote Health Sciences in the Austin Independent School District and other vocational/educational fairs held throughout the year.

Program Effectiveness: Curriculum

Currency of Program

- a. The last program revision occurred in fall of 2000 with the implementation of the WECM curriculum mandated by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board. Course syllabi are updated each semester to reflect current practice and to provide resources for student learning.
- b. Textbooks are continuously reviewed and updated. The faculty is responsible for textbook recommendations. The program's

educational resource committee coordinates review and purchase of computer assisted instructional material and other resources.

Learning Outcomes

The objectives of the courses in the VNP are specifically developed to incorporate the Differentiated Entry Level Competencies of Graduates of Texas Nursing Programs. Competencies are defined as “effective demonstration,” by the time of graduation, of knowledge, judgment, skills and professional values derived from the nursing and education content. The competencies describe the expected outcomes for students at time of graduation. The competencies are organized according to three major roles of the nurse: Provider of Care, Coordinator of Care, and Member of a Profession. The vocational nursing role represents the beginning level of the nursing practice continuum.

Catalog Content

Information about the program, intended to inform the public, prospective students, and current students is current, accurate, clear, and consistent. The course and program listings are updated each semester and published in the ACC Schedule. Changes to the catalog are done annually. The VNP notifies applicants of possible program changes as soon as possible: use of “mass” mailing and updating the web page has been utilized.

Instructional Resources

Students and faculty have access to many instructional resources including the nursing computer lab with multiple CD-ROM programs, CAIs, and access to the Internet. The library at RVS is an extensive resource with books, journals, videos and more computers available to augment student learning.

Faculty review the use of supplemental instructional resources each semester as they review course learning activities in each syllabi. The VNP surveys students each semester regarding satisfaction of learning resources. Responses are consistently positive to the survey item “VNG program provided a learning environment through the use of resources. “

Course Syllabi

(1) Course Syllabi are reviewed and revised (as appropriate) each semester and appear in a departmentally approved format. Each nursing course has a syllabi and copies of all syllabi are on file in the nursing office.

(2) There are 14 courses in the VNP. All courses within the LVN program utilize departmental syllabi.

Alternative Delivery

Each level is taught in sequence through IVC to FBG students. Each semester, the VN program has one level being taught IVC. In every course, however, teaching methods other than lecture are incorporated into instruction. Case studies, concept mapping, feedback lecture and group work are used extensively throughout the program to augment lecture. Only one course in the program, VNSG 1115, is taught in an 8-week session.

SCANS Competencies

SCANS competencies are described in the VN Program Handbook and each syllabus denotes objectives that are SCANS competencies.

External Advisory Committee Input

Advisory Committees (Austin and Fredericksburg) are an influential presence for the VNP; advisory meetings are held twice a year. Minutes from Advisory Board meetings are posted on the web page for everyone to review. The Advisory Board was a large part of the WECM curriculum change and provided helpful guidance through the transition.

Job Skills Analysis

The VNP curriculum is aligned to meet essential competencies identified by the Board of Vocational Nurse Examiners and Advisory Committee input. Surveys are sent to employers six months after graduation asking if students were adequately prepared for the role of entry-level vocational nurse. Evaluation results are used in curriculum revision.

Program Effectiveness: Technology

Technology Assessment

From Fall 1999- Spring 2002, 47 sections were taught via IVC. IVC technology has a large impact on the VNP. Student evaluations noted some shortcomings in the IVC equipment that were impacting the learning environment. The program responded and implemented as many of the suggestions as possible. For example, changing the size of the monitors and upgrading the microphone were just a few of the changes to augment the IVC learning environment.

Program Effectiveness: Faculty

Faculty Credentials

All faculty meet or exceed the SACS standards. The VNP currently has nine full time faculty members; five have a Masters of Science in Nursing, one has a Masters in Education, two are currently enrolled in a Master's program, and one has a Bachelors of Science in Nursing. Current adjuncts have either a Masters or Bachelors. All faculty must have a minimum of three years recent nursing or teaching experience.

Number of Faculty Adequate to Teach Courses

Percentage of Sections/Contact Hours Taught by Full Time Faculty

Fiscal Year	% of Sections	% Contact Hours
1997	81	86
1998	78	83
1999	87	89
2000	88	88
2001	91	95

Adjunct nursing faculty are primarily employed to teach in the nursing skills laboratory and clinical areas. The number and utilization of adjunct varies from semester to semester depending on the VNG course being offered and the needs of the Program.

Faculty Professional Development

The faculty maintains expertise in their instructional areas through their participation in continuing education offerings and through their employment in clinical settings. Each faculty member acquires a minimum of 15 hours of

continuing education related to nursing, health care, or education annually. The faculty is committed to redefining, adapting, changing, and maintaining the knowledge level and expertise necessary to meet their professional responsibilities. The faculty also engages in a minimum of 12 professional development hours related to self-improvement, technology, and instruction.

All full time faculty are member of the Texas Association of Vocational Nurse Educators (TAVNE), Texas Community Teachers Association, and most are members of the National League of Nursing. Several individuals have contributed to nursing textbooks and some have been published in nursing journals.

Teaching Effectiveness

Student evaluations for all faculty members have been very good to excellent in the 2001-2002 year. Faculty members submitted portfolios that demonstrate the dedication and creativity of each faculty member.

Each course syllabus includes specific learning activities for the individual models. The VNP faculty are dedicated to creating a learning environment that will meet the variety of learning styles of the students. Each faculty has the freedom to choose the strategy that he/she feels is most appropriate for the material and the class. Examples of learning activities include: (a) concept mapping, (b) case studies, (c) small and large group activities, (d) gaming, (e) computer assisted instruction, (f) role playing, (g) multimedia, (h) cultural and diabetic luncheons, and lecture. Interactive video conferencing is used to deliver the programming to Fredericksburg.

The nursing process and critical thinking are threads of the VNP's conceptual framework that are found in the objectives of each course. Activities in the classroom and clinical setting are directed at providing the students an opportunity to develop those critical thinking skills. Objectives for each level are based on Bloom's cognitive levels and are designed to demonstrate progression across the curriculum.

Program Effectiveness: Diversity

Student Diversity

Age: Average Age ranged from 28.8 to 32.5.

Ethnicity: Over the last three years, the percentage of Hispanic students has risen from 14% to as much as 26%. The Asian population varies, but in 2001 and spring 2002, there has been a consistent presence in the program. The “Black/Non-white” population has remained consistent at 24%. The increasing numbers of Hispanics and Asians has paralleled a decrease in the “white” population.

Gender: The number of male students varies significantly from class to class. Since 1999, the percentage of males in a class was never above 13%.

Graduate Diversity

Table: Demographics of VNG Graduates

Year	Avg. Age	Gender		%White	%Black	%Hispanic	%Other
		Male	Female				
August 2001	32.2	1	22	52	30	13	4
Dec. 2001	29.1	4	21	65	20	24	4
May 2002	NA	0	23	39	30	30	

Data from the 2000 census documents a Hispanic population of 30% in the greater Austin area. A goal of ACC is for the student population to reflect that of the community. Most recent graduate statistics indicate achievement of that goal.

Faculty Diversity

In Fall 2002, the VNP has nine full time faculty members: 22% black and 78% white, 100% female. There are five adjuncts: 20% black, 80% white, and 40% male.

Program Effectiveness: Student Satisfaction

Course Evaluations

The VNP conducts evaluations upon completion of each course and upon graduation. As part of its Systematic Plan of Evaluation, the VNP looks at the degree of satisfaction expressed by students and graduates regarding the curriculum, the learning environment, and resources. The summary of the results of those survey follow:

Curriculum:

2000-2001 94.4-100% positive responses

2000-2002 2001-2002 95-100% positive responses

Determined by survey items: (Course Evaluation)

- Objectives were clearly stated.
- Course helped attain level objectives.
- Prerequisites helped attain level objectives.
- Content reflected course objectives.
- Text and readings met learning needs.
- Audiovisuals helped me to learn the material.
- Syllabus clearly written.
- Course exams reflected course objectives.

➤ Learning Environment and Support Services

These item lines were added to the course evaluation in 2001. For 2001-2002, 100% of responses were positive regarding the learning environment and support services.

Graduate Surveys

The results of graduate surveys conducted by OIE to the item “ACC preparation for work or further education was 100% since 2000-2001. The VNP conducts a graduate survey approximately six months after graduation. For the graduating class of August 2001, there was 100% positive responses to the item “The VNG program at ACC helped me meet my employment needs.” Results for the December 2001 class are in the process of being tabulated, but review indicates all positive responses.

Program Effectiveness: Employer Satisfaction

Employment Rates

The THECB results of graduate surveys for 1999-2000 indicate that 66 of 68 graduates (97.1%) were employed and/or in higher education programs. Two students were enrolled in higher education programs and were not working. The graduate survey conducted by the VNP parallel these results with each class. Graduates are working and/or enrolled in higher education. The graduate survey indicates the employment is in a wide range of practice settings.

Employer Satisfaction

The healthcare community values the skills of the graduates of the ACC Vocational Nursing Program. Consistently, the employer’s surveys indicate 100%

positive responses to the item “Graduate prepared to function as beginning practitioner of VNG.” However, there is a poor rate of return for employer surveys. Employers are identified by responses on the graduate survey conducted six months after graduation.

Program Effectiveness: Transfer Institutional Satisfaction

This indicator was not addressed as not a required component for workforce programs and data not available.

Section 5: Institutional Effectiveness Measures

Outcome 1: Student Completion Rate

Intended Outcome: 75% of students admitted to the VNP at ACC will complete the program without interruption.

Assessment Criteria: Comparison of actual level of completion with expected level of completion.

Methodology: Calculate the percentage of graduating students that completed the program without interruption and compare with expected level of completion.

Results:

Completion Rate

Year	% Completing Without Interruption
Dec. 1999	77
August 2000	43
August 2001	48
Dec. 2001	61% in Austin 88% in Fredericksburg
May 2002	56

Improvement Actions: 1. Students assigned faculty advisor for each level of the program. The advisor provides information regarding appropriate referrals, such as tutoring and counseling.
2. Use of nursing tutor.

Impact: Faculty is concerned about the high attrition and has formulated additional strategies to assist students.

Outcome 2: Licensure

Intended Outcome: 90% of the graduates will pass the NCLEX-PN on the first attempt.

Assessment Criteria: Results on the NCLEX-PN.

Methodology: Calculate the percentage of graduates who pass the NCLEX-PN on the first attempt.

Results:

Table: NCLEX-PN Pass Rates

Year/Class	% of Graduates Passing on First Attempt
<i>August 2000</i>	94%/Austin 100%/FBR
<i>August 2001</i>	100%/Austin
<i>December 2001</i>	88.4%/Austin 100%/FBR

Improvement Actions:

1. Use HESI Exit; students scoring low are counseled individually by PC.
2. Recommend use of NCLEX-PN review text/software.

Impact: December 2001 class was the first to graduate under the new WECM curriculum. Will monitor student performance closely. ACC results remain above national levels.

Outcome 3: Graduate preparation/program satisfaction.

Intended Outcome: 90% of all graduates will rate program satisfaction overall and by item as positive.

Assessment Criteria:

1. Calculate the percentage of positive responses on the Program Evaluation Tool to the specific item/s related to program satisfaction. 2. Calculate the percentage of positive responses on the VNG Graduate Survey to the items: "Met objectives for enrolling in VNG Program" and "The VNP helped me meet my employment objectives." Compare to expected level of satisfaction.

Methodology:

1. Program evaluation is administered at the end of the program. Calculate the % of positive responses to the specific item/s related to program satisfactions and compared to expected level of satisfaction. 2. Graduate Survey is sent to graduates 6 months after graduation. Calculate percentage of positive response and compare to expected level of satisfaction.

Results:

Table: Program Satisfaction

Year	Program Evaluation % Positive	Graduate Survey % Positive
1999-2000	100	100
2000-2001	94.4-100	100
2001-2002	95.4-100	100

Improvement Actions:

Program continues to monitor the satisfaction of graduates and makes revisions related to feedback. The return of graduate surveys remains low; the evaluation committee develops a list of permanent addresses for each class. In December 2001, the program evaluation is conducted online.

Impact:

Online evaluations enable committee to aggregate data and provide feedback to the faculty in a timely manner.

Outcome 4: Employer Satisfaction

Intended Outcome: 100% of employers will report that the VNP adequately prepared the graduate as an entry-level practitioner of vocational nursing.

Assessment Criteria: Calculate the percentage of positive responses to the item on the Employer Survey: "Graduate prepared to function as an entry level practitioner of vocational nursing and compare to expected level of satisfaction.

Methodology: Employer survey sent to employers named by the graduate in the graduate survey.

Results:

Table: Employer Satisfaction

Year	% Positive Responses
August 2000	100
August 2001	100
December 2001	95

Improvement Actions: (1) Increase the rate of return on surveys. (2) Continue collaborative relationships with employers to respond to industry requirements for practitioners.

Impact: Graduates meet a community need for safe practitioners.

New Institutional Effectiveness Measures

Outcome: Graduation Rate

Intended Outcome: The VNP will graduate 75% of the number of each class admitted.

Assessment Criteria: The percentage of graduates compared to the number admitted.

Methodology: Calculate the percentage of graduates compared to the number admitted. Compare to expected level of graduation.

Outcome: Placement Rate

Intended Outcome: 90% of graduates will be working in nursing within one year of graduation.

Assessment Criteria: Percentage of graduates placed within one year of graduation.

Methodology: Calculate Responses to the Graduate Survey.

Outcome: Critical Thinking

Intended Outcome:

(1) 90% of graduates and employers report that the graduate utilizes critical thinking skills and the nursing process as the basis for providing care.

(2) 90% of graduating students will achieve a 85% probability score on the HESI Exit Exam.

Assessment Criteria: (1) % of positive responses to item on graduate and employer survey addressing critical thinking skills and (2) percentage of students scoring an 85 or above probability score on the HESI Exam.

Methodology: (1) Send Graduate and Employer Surveys at designated times. Calculate the percentage of position responses to item related to critical thinking skills and (2) Administer the HESI and calculate the percentage of students achieving a 85 or higher probability score.

Section 6: Recommendations

Recommendation 1: Develop strategies to enhance the efficient use of faculty time to develop innovative curriculum and student centered learning activities.

Recommendation 2: Revise degree plan to include a course in Spanish for the Health Professional (2 SCH) and reduce medical terminology to 1 SCH.

Recommendation 3: Review and revise curriculum content to reflect current changes and essential competencies: to include, but not limited to, introduction of bioterrorism content.

Recommendation 4: Design strategies that enable the skills lab to provide a more interactive, collaborative learning student environment.

Recommendation 5: Develop strategies to (1) identify students at high risk for poor performance in the nursing program and (2) provide appropriate services to those identified as high risk.

Recommendation 6: Develop service-learning experiences for the students.

Recommendation 7: Modify curriculum to be offered in web-based format to provide increased accessibility to student who cannot attend class in the traditional onsite format.

Section 7: Action Plans for the Vocational Nursing Program
January 2003

Recommendation 1. Develop strategies to enhance the efficient use of faculty time to develop innovative curriculum and student centered learning activities.			
Year	Actions	Target Date	Responsible
1	Examine administrative rules governing full time workloads for Health Science Faculty and required office hours: discuss implications for faculty and scheduling.	Spring 2003	PC
	Combine faculty/curriculum committee meetings to allow opportunity for faculty to meet with Level instructors and conduct nursing program committee activities.	Spring	PC/Faculty
	Establish time limits for agenda items and adhere to schedule; faculty to provide detailed written notes to use with minutes.	Spring	PC/Faculty
	Maintain consistent pattern of teaching assignment to increase time for innovation curriculum development.	Spring	PC
Estimated Year 1 costs:			
2	Hire additional full time faculty member.	Fall 2003	PC
	Hire additional administrative assistant (or hourly for minimum 20 hrs/week) to facilitate appropriate monitoring of required data i.e. Immunizations, CPR, hospital mandated safety exam.	Fall	PC
	Evaluate and implement appropriate teaching assignments to utilize faculty expertise and strengths.	Fall	PC
	Provide travel money for faculty to attend faculty development activities to enhance their expertise and teaching abilities- minimum of 1 FT faculty per semester funded to attend programs other than the Texas Association of Vocational Nurse Educators conference and convention. (The Board of Vocational Nurse Examiners and the National League of Nursing Accrediting Commission require 15 hours of continuing education.)	Fall	PC
Estimated Year 2 costs: \$70, 000			
3	Increase number of faculty funded to attend nationally recognized faculty development activities.	Fall 2004	PC
	Continue to evaluate workload and teaching assignments.		

Estimated Year 3 costs: \$1000			
4	Continue to increase opportunities for travel for faculty development.		PC
Estimated Year 4 costs: \$2000			

**Action Plans for (Program)
Month Year**

Recommendation 2. Revise degree plan to include a course in Spanish for the Health Professional (2 SCH) and reduce medical terminology to 1 SCH (adhere to total hour limits).

Year	Actions	Target Date	Responsible
1	Conduct needs assessment of Health Science Programs to determine need for ability to communicate with the Hispanic client.	Spring	PC
	Make recommendations to the Department Head of Allied Health for the development of above course as a local needs course under WECM.	Summer	PC
	VNG faculty to determine placement of course in degree plan if AHS agrees to the development.	Summer	Faculty
Estimated Year 1 costs:			
2	Allied Health to develop the course-may require additional adjunct faculty.	Fall	AHS Dept Head
	VNG faculty to develop plan to notify all applicants of the degree plan change and it impact on their individual progress: mail to applicant pool, CAPS, notify advisors	Fall	Admissions committee; advisors
	Make appropriate changes to catalog, web page, brochures, etc.	Fall	PC
Estimated Year 2 costs: \$500 (printing and mailing). -one time cost			
3	Implement the change in the degree plan.	Spring 04	
Estimated Year 3 costs: Adjunct faculty: \$5000-ongoing cost			
4	Conduct student course evaluations to assess effectiveness of course to increase communication with the Hispanic client.		
Estimated Year 4 costs: No new additional costs			

**Action Plans for (Program)
Month Year**

Recommendation 3: Review and revise curriculum content to reflect current changes and essential competencies: to include, but not limited to, introduction of bioterrorism content.			
Year	Actions	Target Date	Responsible
1	Faculty to journal the amount of time spent presenting each assigned module; near end of semester, review and compare actual time to allotted time.	Spring 03	Faculty
	Review essential competencies required by BVNE and NLNAC; ensure that all competencies are covered in the nursing curriculum.	Fall	Faculty
	Faculty to establish essential elements to be included in each module.	Spring	Faculty
	Write test questions that follow the NCLEX Test Plan; utilize formal test plan format to document.	Spring	Faculty
	Levels will conduct test reviews before and after exams given.	Spring	Faculty
Estimated Year 1 costs:			
2	Implement content on bioterrorism and other revisions.	Fall 03	Faculty
	Make other changes to course content identified by review.	Fall/ Spring	Faculty
	Continue to develop test items that will enhance student's critical thinking abilities.		
Estimated Year 2 costs:			
3	Continue to review course content and make revisions as indicated.	Fall/ Spring	Faculty
Estimated Year 3 costs: no new costs			
4	Continue to review course content and make revisions as indicated.	Fall/ Spring	Faculty
Estimated Year 4 costs: no new costs			

**Action Plans for (Program)
Month Year**

Recommendation 4: Design strategies that enable the skills lab to provide a more interactive, collaborative learning student environment.

Year	Actions	Target Date	Responsible
1	Examine the current scheduling of labs for skills courses to determine if being utilized effectively.	Spring 03	Faculty
	Consider offering VNSG 2331 as an 8-week course or changing the start time.	Spring	Faculty
	Make revisions to schedule for Spring 04.	Summer	Faculty
	Increase the use of interactive learning, CAIs, and collaborative learning activities.	Spring/ Summer	Faculty
	Purchase software.	Summer	Faculty
Estimated Year 1 costs: \$1000			
2	Move to Eastview Campus	Fall 03	
	Implement scheduling change.	Spring 04	Faculty
	Purchase the computerized, interactive mannequin.	Spring	
Estimated Year 2 costs:			
3	Restructure lab manager position – faculty position.	Fall 04	
	Hire an assistant lab manager- non-faculty		
Estimated Year 3 costs: \$50, 000-cost to be shared with Associate Degree Program			
4	Continue developing critical thinking scenarios for skills lab.	Fall 05	
Estimated Year 4 costs:			

**Action Plans for (Program)
Month Year**

Recommendation 5: Develop strategies to (1) identify students at high risk for poor performance in the nursing program and (2) provide appropriate support services for those students identified as high risk.			
Year	Actions	Target Date	Responsible
1	Develop an assessment tool to identify high-risk students. High-risk indicators will be supported by research. Student will be identified as “high risk” if they have two or more risk factors.	Spring 03	PC
	Review literature regarding remediation strategies.	Spring	Faculty
	Develop guidelines for a peer-mentoring program.	Spring	Faculty
Estimated Year 1 costs:			
2	Implement “Risk Assessment Tool.”	Fall 03	PC/Faculty
	Full time counselor and tutor needed to develop individual plans for students identified as high risk.	Fall	Dean/PC
	Additional administrative staff required to compile data for the Assessment Tool.	Fall	Dean/PC
	Begin a “Peer Mentoring” program on a voluntary basis; conduct evaluation at end of semester.	Fall/ Spring	Faculty
	Explore grant opportunities to fund student support activities.	Fall	Faculty
Estimated Year 2 costs: (Dependent on current status of counselor and tutor); release time/stipend for faculty facilitating the mentoring program – 2 LEH)			
3	Continue use Risk Assessment Tool and development plans for each class when admitted.	Fall (04)/ Spring	Faculty
	Seek grant funding to support Peer Mentoring.	Fall/Spring	Faculty
	Include mentoring as a requirement in VNSG 1219.	Spring	Faculty
Estimated Year 3 costs: Stipend/release time for faculty monitoring the mentoring program. Ongoing for tutor/counselor.			
4	Continue use of Assessment Tool and identified strategies. Evaluate achievement of goals.	Fall 05	Faculty
Estimated Year 4 costs: No new expenses.			

**Action Plans for (Program)
Month Year**

Recommendation 6: Develop service-learning experiences for the students.			
Year	Actions	Target Date	Responsible
1	Form ad hoc committees to identify potential service learning opportunities: ACC Daycare; Oak Springs Elementary, and Health Department Clinics offering health maintenance activities to adult clients VA, Peoples Community Clinic, Caritas.	Spring 03	Faculty-ad hoc committee
	Meet with Risk Manager regarding liabilities when students participate in service activities that involve client contact.	Summer	PC
	Investigate the procedure for faculty certification in Hearing and Vision Screening.	Summer	Faculty
Estimated Year 1 costs:			
2	Designated faculty becomes certified in vision and hearing.	Fall 03/ Spring 04	Faculty
	Meet with representatives of AISD regarding health maintenance/promotion activities for students at Oak Springs Elementary.	Spring	PC
	Determine the certification required (if any) for faculty supervising students in health promotion/maintenance.		
	Identify clinical sites for adult community health experiences. Initiate contact and affiliation agreements if necessary.	Spring	PC/TFC
Estimated Year 2 costs: Cost for certification and equipment if necessary.			
3	Implement health promotion at Oak Springs by the pediatric students.	Fall 04	Faculty
	Continue other current service learning activities		
	Hire additional adjunct faculty to supervise students in multiple community sites.		
Estimated Year 3 costs: \$30, 000.			
4	Continue to develop additional service learning opportunities for students.	Fall 05	Faculty/PC
Estimated Year 4 costs:			

**Action Plans for (Program)
Month Year**

Recommendation 7: Modify curriculum to be offered in web-based format to provide increased accessibility to students who cannot attend class in the traditional on site format.			
Year	Actions	Target Date	Responsible
1	All full time faculty will enroll in Blackboard training; release time will provided.	Spring 03	PC/Faculty
	Faculty encouraged to incorporate the use of Blackboard into some components they are teaching.	Summer	Faculty/PC
	Network with other VN programs in Texas regarding interest in establishing a collaborative for developing web based courses.	Spring/ Summer	PC
	Conduct literature review related to offering online nursing courses, in particular vocational programs; also learning style surveys to identify appropriate candidates for online learning.	Summer	PC
	Contact the BVNE for information about other programs in Texas using web-based instruction.	Summer	PC
	Conduct surveys during CAPS as to the interest in online programming; conduct mail survey of applicants already in the system.	Spring/ Summer	PC
Estimated Year 1 costs: none			
2	Present proposal to advisory committee.	Fall 03	PC
	Develop VNSG 1115 and 1304 in web-based format.	Fall 03	Faculty
	Develop VNSG 1400 in web-based format.	Spring	Faculty
	Begin developing VNSG 1509	Summer	Faculty
	Provide release time for one faculty member each semester.		
Estimated Year 2 costs: \$36,000			
3	Complete 1509 and begin to develop 1510.	Fall 04	Faculty
	Complete VNSG 1510, 1230 and 1234	Spring/ Summer	Faculty/PC
	Obtain release time for appropriate faculty to provide expertise in specialty areas.	Spring	PC
Estimated Year 3 costs: \$24,000			

4	Admit one section of ten students to VNSG 1115, 1304, and 1400 as online students.	Fall 05	Program
	Develop VNSG 1219 in web-based format.	Fall	PC
	Hire additional full time faculty member/adjunct.	Fall	PC
Estimated Year 4 costs: \$50, 000			

Section 8: Comments

The Program Review conducted by the Vocational Nursing Program supports that the VNP provides a quality educational experience for students. Graduates perform above national average on the NCLEX-PN and employers report satisfaction with the graduates skills as entry level practitioners. The program has highly qualified faculty that are dedicated to the success of the student. Faculty made several recommendations to address some identified weakness and developed a plan of action to implement these recommendations.