

Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board
Advisory Committee on RN Nursing Education (ACORN)

Minutes of Meeting Held May 12, 2008
10:00 am – 3:00 pm

Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board
1200 East Anderson Lane
Austin, TX 78752
Board Room

Members Present

Peggy Aalund
Patricia Allen
Barbara Cordell
Regina Jones Johnson
Josefina Lujan
Beth Mancini
Ana Mejia-Dietche
LeAnn Wagner
Mary Beth Thomas

Members Present by Telephone

Eileen Deges Curl
Debora Simmons

Members Absent

Joyce Batcheller
Edward Russell

Coordinating Board Staff Present

Chris Fowler
Donna Carlin
Camille Pridgen

Guests Present

Lu Pelayo
Claire Jordan*

*Present for portions of the agenda

I. Call to Order and Roll Call of Members	Ms. LeAnn Wagner, Convening Chairwoman of the committee started the meeting at 10:05 am. Committee members introduced themselves. Two members participated by telephone (Eileen Deges Curl and Deborah Simmons).
II. Consideration of Minutes from Meeting of March 7, 2008	Ms. Wagner stated that there has been a lot of interest among nursing educators to read the minutes from the March 7, 2008 meeting. She stated that once the minutes were approved they would be posted on the CB website. She called for a motion to approve the minutes. Barbara Cordell moved to approve the minutes. The motion was seconded by Patricia Allen and was unanimously approved.
III. Overview of Committee Charge and Consideration of Chairperson and Rules of Order.	<p>Chris Fowler read the ACORN committee charge. Ms. Fowler asked for a nomination for a committee chair. Regina Jones Johnson nominated LeAnn Wagner. The motion was seconded by Mary Beth Thomas. The motion carried unanimously. Ms. Fowler reminded the members that ACORN is a standing committee of the board but not a statutory advisory committee. She explained that because it is not a statutory committee there is an opportunity to be more informal. Ms. Fowler referred the committee to excerpts of "Roberts Rules of Order" and stated that the committee could adopt them if it wanted to be more formal. Two areas that need to be decided upon are absenteeism and a voting process.</p> <p>The committee decided the following: 1) A roll call vote would be done on all motions; 2) Members attending the meeting by phone could vote on motions over the phone; 3) Proxy votes would not be allowed and members must be either physically present or participating on the telephone in order to vote, and 4) Members could send a proxy (substitute) to attend the meeting and participate in the dialog in their absence but the proxy could not vote. Barbara Cordell made a motion that Roberts Rules of Order would be used to make motions and vote and the four decisions above would go in effect. The motion was seconded by J. Lujan. Members voted unanimously to approve the motion (by roll call).</p>
IV. Discussion and Possible Consideration of Proposed Committee Structure and Near-term issues.	<p>Chris Fowler referred members to the handout "Aligning Statewide Higher Education Goals with Nursing Education Goals" and discussed how Coordinating Board goals for the "Closing the Gaps" plan aligned with goals for Nursing Education in the four areas of Participation, Success, Research, and Excellence.</p> <p>Ms. Fowler proposed four subcommittees of the ACORN members and suggested that people outside of the ACORN committee should participate on the subcommittees. Five areas of concentration for the subcommittees are:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Curriculum 2. Capacity 3. Student Retention and Graduation 4. Education Grants 5. Excellence in nursing education <p>Dr. Lujan requested clarification on the deliverables from each</p>

subcommittee. She asked whether it would be a report, a model, or guidelines. Ms. Wagner stated that each subcommittee would make that determination and it would depend on each committee and its members. Committee members would determine the deliverables.

Dr. Thomas asked that passing the NCLEX-RN also be included and considered by the Retention and Graduation committee.

Dr. Thomas stated that she was excited about the work of the committees and that there would be a formal mechanism to address nursing issues at the Coordinating Board.

Committee members agreed to be on the following committees:

1. Curriculum: Wagner, Chair; Members: Committee as a whole
2. Capacity: Cordell, Chair; Members: Mejia-Dietche, Simmons, Mancini
3. Student Retention & Graduation: Thomas, Chair; Members: Lujan, Jones Johnson, Deges Curl
4. Education Grants: Mancini, Chair; Members: Allen, Aalund, Mejia-Dietche
5. Excellence: Deges Curl, Chair; Members: Allen, Russell, Batcheller

Committee members were encouraged to think about the assignments and contact Ms. Wagner after the meeting if they would like to be added to the membership of another committee. Members of the public were encouraged to e-mail Ms. Fowler if they are interested in being on a committee.

Committee chairs agreed that within two weeks, or by May 26, they would let Ms. Fowler know who will be on each subcommittee, including members solicited from outside of the ACORN committee. Ms. Fowler will send out a list on 5/27 of the information she's received and a list of the subcommittee memberships. Subcommittee members will initially communicate by e-mail to facilitate time. By the next meeting reports from each of the subcommittees will be presented. Each committee will report on the charge they've decided upon, areas of concentration, objectives, timelines for meeting the objectives.

Ms. Fowler stressed that the "straw man" she presented with immediate and long-term objectives was not a required format for the committee to use and that each committee should determine their own goals and objectives.

Ms. Mejia-Dietche made a motion to accept the subcommittee structure, membership and chairs, the framework for the subcommittee structure, the timeline for providing membership (within 2 weeks) feedback, a report on each committee charge, areas of concentration, objectives, and timeline for meeting the objectives at the August meeting. The motion was seconded by Dr. Thomas. The motion carried unanimously by roll call vote.

Ms. Fowler asked whether there should be a target for the number of members from outside the ACORN committee. It was stressed that service should be represented on each committee and that there be a diverse group representing the various levels of nursing education,

	<p>including LVN and proprietary institutions. Dr. Mancini proposed that an upper limit be set for each committee. She proposed no more than 10 members on each committee.</p>
<p>Overview of SB 138 and Summary Presentation on State Financial Aid Opportunities for Nursing Students</p>	<p>Chris Fowler discussed SB 138 which pertains to calculating graduation rates for nursing programs. She stated that in the past week the CB has received some feedback from nursing programs regarding methods for calculating rates. Some of the comments will be considered next week. The Legislature wanted the CB to look at methods for improving retention and graduation rates. Another aspect of the bill was to look at recommendations for improving financial aid.</p> <p>Jane Caldwell, Director of Grants and Special Programs at the CB, presented an overview of state nursing scholarships and exemption programs. She stated that most programs in effect today were implemented in 1989 when a major piece of legislation was passed that created about 15 programs at one time. Ms. Caldwell mentioned that one program for nurses that never got off the ground was a matching fund program. Facilities would partner with the state to match funds and in turn a student employed by the facility that matched the funds would agree to an amount of time to be employed. The program existed for a few years and was eliminated. Also, two loan repayment programs had a small number of awards for a few years. The majority of the money was used for nursing scholarships as outlined below:</p> <p>For Professional nursing students there are four scholarship programs:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Rural Professional nursing students: To qualify, student must reside in a rural area and attend a nursing program in a rural area. 2. LVN to RN transition programs. 3. Rural BSN and graduate nursing students: student must graduate from a rural high school or live in rural area but can enroll in a nursing program at any eligible institution. 4. General scholarship program for professional nursing students: open to any eligible student. <p>Value of awards differs by level of degree:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$1,500 for ADN students • \$2,500 for BSN, graduate nursing students, rural professional nursing program or LVN to RN students, rural BSN and graduate nursing students and general scholarship for professional nursing students. <p>Eligibility requirements for scholarship program: The student must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be a Texas resident • Be enrolled at least half time in an initial or an advanced degree program in professional nursing • Show financial need • Maintain satisfactory academic performance • Register for the selective service or be exempt <p>Scholarship programs for Licensed Vocational Nurses (LVN):</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Rural vocational nursing students: the student must have graduated from a rural high school or lived in a rural area and

- be enrolled in a VN program in a rural area
2. General Scholarship program for VN students: open to any eligible student.

Eligibility requirements are the same as RN student requirements. The maximum award is the lesser of the student's financial need or \$1,500.

Ms. Caldwell explained that schools tend to give smaller awards to more students. For example, the average award for 2007 was \$966 for RN students and \$464 for VN students. Schools received their funds based on the enrollment size in their nursing programs for the prior year. The funding is limited to \$912,153 for 2006-07 for RN programs. For VN programs the total amount was \$45,950. The program is funded through general revenue. Monies were increased for RN programs for 2006-07.

Funds are allocated to the institutions and students apply through the financial aid offices. Schools submit a year end report to the CB. Scholarships are need-based.

Ms. Caldwell said that she has found that nursing students are usually poor candidates for work-study programs because of their clinical, lab and class schedules. Work-study students cannot work more than 20 hours per week and the schedule for nursing programs doesn't always mesh with the needs of the institution. However, in general, work-study programs have been successful in helping students (in all disciplines) become engaged in their degree programs. Funds to support work-student have grown in the past years to more than \$7.5 million.

Dr. Lujan stated that they have had success at El Paso Community College with students working at the student health clinic for their work-study program. Students are found to be more committed to their work and she has found that Hispanic students would rather work than take out a loan.

Mary Beth Thomas asked about reinstating the matching fund for employers program and combining it with a work-study program. Ms. Caldwell stated that there could be interest in expanding work-study for students in a clinical setting. Ms. Caldwell stated that the ACORN committee may be able to assist staff with estimating the capacity for clinical institutions to absorb and participate in work-study programs.

Ms. Caldwell discussed the existing waiver program and two exemption programs:

1. Waiver program of out-of-state tuition. This is a program for out-of-state students attending graduate level nursing programs in Texas. Eligible students receive resident tuition. The students must be able to be licensed in Texas and enroll in a program leading to a master's degree or higher and want to teach in Texas in a RN program. The institution gets a letter of intent from the student, but the statute doesn't allow enforcement of the commitment.

2. Exemption program for clinical preceptors and their children: preceptor can receive up to \$500 or actual tuition charges, whichever is less. The child of a preceptor can receive up to \$500 per semester or actual tuition charges, whichever is less, for up to 10 semesters or until

the student receives his or her bachelor's degree. The preceptor or their children are eligible to participate at the same time or for up to a year after they are a preceptor.

3. Exemption program for children of professional nursing program faculty or staff at public institutions: children of nursing faculty or staff can attend the same institution where s parent teaches and have tuition waived. A child can attend an institution for up to 10 semesters or until they receive a bachelor's degree.

A total of 86 preceptors received the exemption in 2007 for a total amount of funding of \$43,911. A total of 76 children of faculty participated for a total amount of funding of \$152,563.

Ms. Caldwell mentioned the "Outstanding Rural Scholarship Program" which is a partnership between community organizations and the State to help a person get an education in a health related field. Administered through the Center for Rural Health Initiatives. Students must agree to work in a rural area.

Ms. Fowler asked if Ms. Caldwell anticipates anything negative to come from the financial aid report due to the Legislature that will be reviewed by the agency's Board in July 2008. She responded that there could be a recommendation to eliminate small programs by incorporating them into larger programs, such as the LVN scholarship program because it is difficult to justify the staff work that goes into making small programs work. The Texas grants program could be modified to make provisions for additional money to be awarded, for example, for students enrolled in programs deemed as having special need or with a shortage.

Claire Jordan asked if there was a limit to the amount of awards. Students complete a FAFSA application and awards are based on need. If a student gets awards from a variety of sources, they may exceed the amount of a Texas grant.

Beth Mancini stated that the average age of a nursing student is increasing and the students have to provide for their families by working. Once they reach their limits on financial aid they have to work and once they surpass 20 hours of work each week, their school performance suffers. Ms. Caldwell said that the FAFSA family contribution must be considered and any changes in family resources are considered. Students must alert financial aid offices to any changes in students work status. If there is proof that a family's financial status changes, the school's financial aid office can make changes to awards if there is proof of the work status change.

LeAnn Wagner asked whether there could be reinstitution of the scholarship program with funding from nursing licensure fees. Dr. Thomas stated that there are issues associated with doing that. Ms. Caldwell stated that the fees on licensees were minimal and there is nothing legislatively that prohibits the program from being revitalized.

Dr. Deges Curl commented that another source for scholarships could come from the licensure fees paid by health care institutions.

Ms. Caldwell stated that there should be a joint committee of the

	<p>LVN/RN scholarship programs that may be more effective.</p> <p>Lu Pelayo from San Antonio College commented that the LVN scholarship program awards are so low that LVN students may choose to work rather than receive the awards.</p> <p>Dr. Degees Curl commented that nursing students are often second career students and max out of their financial aid awards and frequently it occurs halfway through their programs. Ms. Caldwell stated that the regulations are from the federal government and there are federal restrictions that are very difficult to get around. She stated that the statute for financial aid for nursing students could be changed to award them to all second degree students, or graduate students, etc. The committee would need to recommend any changes. Dr. Mancini stated that any recommended changes would need to be based on actual data of what is the most efficient use of money.</p>
<p>Discussion of Strategies for Investigating Financial Assistance “Best Practices” for Nursing Students.</p>	<p>Ms. Wagner expressed appreciation for Jane Caldwell and her presentation on financial aid, and then opened the discussion to identifying best practices going on around the state for financial assistance for nursing students. Ms. Fowler read some of the recommendations included the “Strategies to Increase the Number of Graduates from Initial RN Licensure Programs.” Members offered examples of different financial assistance programs:</p> <p>Examples:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. LeAnn Wagner: Victoria College has a program entitled “Works of Mercy” which provide an individual nursing student a maximum of \$100 for emergencies, such as money for gas. The money does not have to be repayed and the funding is from a private donor. 2. Dr. Lujan: Counselors at El Paso Community College: they report to the nursing Dean. Workforce solutions Upper Rio Grande: provides stop gap coverage for areas of need such as gas, day care, groceries. The program is called Arriba. Students have mandatory financial management training. Of 52 students enrolled, 90 percent completed on time. 3. Ana Mejia-Dietche discussed a similar program in the Austin area (Capitol Idea) does things such as paying down car loans, transportation dollars, day care. <p>There was discussion as to how to use this information.</p> <p>Ms. Fowler stated that the legislative charge was to develop recommendations for financial aid, but all of these issues are interwoven with other issues of retaining students.</p> <p>There was discussion as to whether someone from Arriba or Project Quest would be interested in joining the committee to assist with this discussion. The committee was also interested in finding out if Jane Caldwell would like to participate. Several committee members thought she would be a great resource.</p> <p>Lu Pelayo mentioned that she had worked with Project Quest and that a lot depended on personality and duties of the director of Project Quest. In some cases, when the student</p>

started having difficulty, the instructors were in touch with those at Project Quest and they worked to get the student back on track. There were other directors at project Quest who didn't have contact with the instructors and those students floundered. She wanted to point out that it is important to include the financial aid piece, but it is also important to include the faculty piece as well.

4. Regina Jones Johnson commented on what her school is doing. She recently served on the scholarship committee to determine what students are getting what awards, but expressed that they aren't really doing anything innovative. The students applied for scholarship and submitted financial information, an essay, income information, how much money they planned on spending next semester. Two faculty members reviewed each student. Faculty evaluated, rated and ranked the student based on the information. If there was a two point discrepancy between faculty then the faculty came together again. Then the faculty met as a committee to make final decisions. She stated that there is around \$264,000 for scholarships. It is spread throughout full-time, part-time, undergraduate and graduate students.

Another committee member talked about her school's finding that it is better to give one larger grant rather than three smaller grants. A literature article showed that larger amounts had a greater impact on student success.

Pat Allen talked about how her school used to do a lot of small grants, but now is focusing on larger amounts. They are doing better giving the larger amounts. Texas Tech has over \$300,000 for scholarship programs.

Ms. Fowler asked how to build a financial base for scholarships.

Pat Allen explained that Tech have a development officer who works exclusively on finding funds for nursing students and the school.

5. Pat Allen also wanted to share one best practice in the West Texas region. The South Plains Nursing Coalition, which is all the nursing schools, invited hospitals, and workforce boards, has a partnership with American State Bank. The Bank has raised over \$200,000 for nursing students in the south plains and provides low interest loans to nursing students. The bank didn't think it would make money off the loans, but it has and the program has benefitted west Texas. She thought that public-private partnerships may be the way to go.

Discussion centered around how to share information about the different initiatives, and how to identify best practices and have the best return for the money.

One committee member suggested that it might be difficult to determine best practices until the state has a uniform method for calculating

graduation rates. Ms Fowler explained that a methodology for calculating graduation rates is in the Board's rules. LeAnn Wagner commented that previous reports have already determined that students who have consistent financial aid have a higher graduation rate.

Dr. Lujan suggested that after creating the best practices document the committee should have conferences to promote those practices, or another way to apply these best practices.

Ms. Wagner said that statewide summits are very effective in terms of involving a large segment of nurse educators.

Another committee member commented that it is not just identifying best practices, but translating them to application throughout the state. It is important to do it with intentionality.

Ms. Wagner mentioned that the state is not going to dramatically increase state funds so it will be important to leverage state money with private funds with employers and businesses in the state.

Ms. Johnson explained that her institution has an agreement with Seton Hospital System to increase the number of graduates in the ADN to BSN program. Seton has agreed to pay, over a six year period of time, each nurse that comes back to school \$10,000.

Ms. Mejia-Dietche asked if anyone has quantified how much the hospital systems are putting out there? Matching programs, scholarship programs, etc.

Ms. Jordan said that THA did a survey to see how much the hospitals have contributed to nursing education since the last legislative session so they have a number.

Another committee member wanted to mention that when thinking about best practices, it is important to remember that some of the smaller schools don't have deep pockets. There are three hospitals in her area, the largest of which has 100 beds. It is hard to get funding from hospitals of that size.

Ms. Mejia-Dietche mentioned that community colleges don't have development personnel dedicated to raising funds. It is an untapped resource that should be looked at especially for nursing programs. She also mentioned that a considerable amount of money is being invested in workforce issues, but not a lot is being allocated to healthcare workforce initiatives. From a public policy point of view, it is being overlooked.

Ms. Jordan mentioned not to just think about direct funding from the State, but other initiatives. She used as an example that some states have offered specialty license plates where the income from those sales went directly to support a scholarship fund for nursing.

Donna Carlin mentioned that the Coordinating Board is about to start a program for the whole state in which license plates are sold and the money goes for scholarships.

Reports	<p>Donna Carlin gave a report on the LVN Advisory committee meeting which was held on March 28th. The committee consists of 12 members. The first meeting was similar to ACORN's first meeting. The charge was presented and a chair was elected; Pat Recek from Austin Community College. The consultant for the LVN curriculum, Dr. Carol Kenner, is the Dean of Nursing at the University of Oklahoma and is co-author of the book on use of the IOM competencies for nursing education. Also in attendance at the meeting was Ruth Eckenstein who works for a comparable agency to the Board of Nursing that oversees LVN education in Oklahoma and has been working in LPN education for over 20 years. Ms. Carlin mentioned that Oklahoma has a standardized curriculum that is used in all of the public LVN programs.</p> <p>Ms. Carlin said that the committee will not meet again until August. She also mentioned that the LVN advisory committee is not a permanent committee and it will only meet while the consultants are working on the model curriculum.</p> <p>LeAnn Wagner asked about how Oklahoma went about designing their one curriculum. Ms. Carlin said that it has been in effect for 20 years and she will find out how it came about.</p> <p>Ms. Fowler presented a brief report on the consultant's progress. The consultant, Brenda Cleary, has prepared a survey and sent it to the nursing programs in the state. The survey inquiries about the use of IOM competencies in the programs' current curriculum. Dr. Cleary plans to align the curriculum framework with the IOM competencies</p> <p>Beginning in June, Dr. Cleary, along with Dr. Kenner who is a subcontractor to Dr. Cleary, will begin to explore the competencies further. They will be "drilling down" for didactic and clinical concepts for each competency and will also be looking particularly at issues of patient safety.</p> <p>Ms. Carlin mentioned that the consultants will also be looking at curriculum models in other states (e.g., Oregon, Massachusetts and the Carnegie study) Dr. Cleary also mentioned that she will be focusing on the essentials for baccalaureate degree education and then, carving out the essentials for associate degree education. Dr. Cleary thinks that this method will help promote a seamless articulation between these levels of RN education. Dr. Cleary will also be looking at the DELC competencies.</p> <p>There was discussion about when the DELCs are going to be redone by the Board of Nursing. Dr. Thomas mentioned that the question of revising the DELCs will go to the board meeting in July and then, the work would begin in Fall 2008.</p> <p>Dr. Mancini reported on the education grants consortium. The Nursing Innovation Grant Program funded 10 two-year academic and clinical partnerships and two three-year hospital partnerships. At its first meeting, the grantees formed a consortium and started to think about how to overcome problems that the Program has encountered in the past in identifying best practices. For example, when people wanted to compare projects after the grant period ended, it wasn't possible</p>

	<p>because the operational definitions weren't the same. As a result, grantees couldn't really compare the results of the projects. The new consortium has committed from the beginning to establish some common measures around effectiveness, graduation, NCLEX rate, etc. They also will use a common cost-benefit analysis methodology. Wanted to look at return on investment for hospitals. To communicate those efforts efficiently, the consortium has established a website through Angelo State University.</p> <p>Dr. Allen reported on the CB grant for the next statewide nursing summit, scheduled for April 1, 2, 3rd in Lubbock. The program will include two national speakers. One has an academic perspective and the other has a practice perspective. The whole conference is centered around partnerships.</p> <p>LeAnn Wagner asked Chris Fowler to give a report on the state's participation in a National Conference in Washington, D.C. that is funded by the U.S. Department of Labor and is sponsored by AARP and Robert Wood Johnson.</p>
Public Comment	<p>Bonnie Higgins made some comments regarding the financial aid issue. She said that many students have to work 40 hours a week to get health insurance and recommend that the State provide health insurance for students and their families who are going to nursing school or school in general. She also agreed about having conferences in order to get ideas across to nurse educators and suggested that regional conferences are also needed. Finally, she advised that the consultants should not use any major parts of the DELCs in developing the curriculum framework because they need to be revised. She suggesting using concepts from the DELCs, but not the specifics.</p> <p>LeAnn Wagner commented on Bonnie Higgin's comments. She mentioned that she wrote many letters to insurance companies explaining that a nursing student enrolled in nine credit hours is a full time student. She explained that once the letter was written it was never really an issue.</p> <p>Ms. Jordan mentioned that TNA is getting ready for the legislative session and a consortium has been created which includes business interests. TNA is conducting meetings with Texas Association of Business, Texas Chamber of Commerce and local hospital groups.</p> <p>Dr. Thomas mentioned that on September 25th the Board of Nursing is hosting a workshop on nursing innovation. Nancy Spector from the National Council will be a speaker at the workshop.</p> <p>Irma Ray asked that the new curriculum consider educating ESL students. Her school has particular challenges in this area.</p> <p>Dr. Lujan mentioned it is also important to look at the number of students with this problem. At this point, she is not able to determine the number because it is very difficult to look identify students with language and cultural problems unless the students self- identify themselves as ESL.</p>
Future Meeting Dates for ACORN	The next meeting will be held on August 15 in the Board Room.

Agenda Items for Next Meeting	The Committee will expect preliminary reports from the subcommittees. The other focus of the meeting will be on evaluating the consultant's first draft of the curriculum framework. Dr. Cleary will be attending the meeting.
Adjourn	The meeting was adjourned by Ms. Wagner at 3pm.