

Chattahoochee
Valley Community College

file

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Belle S. Wheelan, Ph.D.
President
Commission on Colleges
1866 Southern Lane
Decatur, GA 30033

Dear Dr. Wheelan:

I am writing to provide updated information pertaining to two of our instructional programs at Chattahoochee Valley Community College.

We recently reactivated our AAS degree in Criminal Justice. This degree program was previously offered at the College and was listed in our *1999-2001 Catalog and Student Handbook*, which was in effect when our last Institutional Self-Study Report was prepared. We discontinued the degree program for several years thereafter, offering only a certificate in the field. Due to an increased local demand for a two-year credential in criminal justice, we received approval from the Alabama Department of Postsecondary Education to reactivate our AAS program this fall.

The other program about which I am writing is our AAS in Nursing. In July 2009, our College was notified that the program had lost its accreditation with the National League for Nursing Accrediting Commission. Shortly after receiving word of this action, Laurel Blackwell, who was serving as President of CVCC at that time, and Greg Labyak, our Dean of Instruction, called Jack Allen, our SACS staff representative, to notify him and to discuss any additional steps that might need to be taken. I understand that Dr. Allen told Drs. Blackwell and Labyak that some follow-up would be necessary, and indicated that he needed to confirm how SACS would respond to the matter. Dr. Allen has asked that we forward to you a copy of the notification from NLNAC denying continued accreditation, as well as an explanation of how the institution had responded in the areas in which it was deemed to be non-compliant.

The enclosed letters from NLNAC, dated July 27 and July 30, 2009, cite two areas in which deficiencies were identified. Non-compliance with Standard II: Faculty focused on the number and qualifications of instructors at CVCC. Issues cited under Standard VII: Educational Effectiveness related to the insufficiency of our Systematic Plan of Evaluation (SPE), in terms of the documentation of measureable levels of expected achievement, the collection and analysis of data, and the use of data for decision-making and program improvement.

We began taking steps to address faculty and institutional effectiveness issues even before receiving official notification of the loss of accreditation by NLNAC. New full-time nursing faculty were hired, significantly lowering the faculty to student ratio, which now stands at about 1 to 20.


All full-time nursing faculty hold at least a master's degree in their field and, therefore, fully meet the credentialing requirements of NLNAC. Ms. Resa Lord, who is serving as Chair of our Nursing Department for the fall semester, has been given a 100% release from teaching to pursue her administrative responsibilities. We are initiating a search for a permanent nursing chair who is expected to begin working in January 2011. At that time, Ms. Lord will resume full-time teaching duties in the nursing department. NLNAC also requires that at least half of the clinical instructors employed by the institution hold a master's degree in nursing. The College has taken steps to meet that requirement as well, and we anticipate being in full compliance in the Spring 2011 Semester. (The MSN is not required by either the Alabama Board of Nursing or the Alabama State Board of Education.) In addition, we have assigned a full-time master's prepared faculty member to serve as a mentor for each part-time clinical instructor who does not possess the MSN Degree.

Since we received word from NLNAC about our accreditation, the faculty in our nursing department have drafted a new and much improved Systematic Plan of Evaluation. We hired Dr. Ann Schlumberger to guide and assist the faculty in this process. Dr. Schlumberger, who currently serves as Chairperson of the Department of Nursing at the University of Arkansas at Little Rock, has a wealth of experience as a consultant and an NLNAC Board member and evaluator. Dr. Schlumberger presented a workshop in April 2010, which actively engaged our entire nursing faculty in the process of developing the SPE. The document is organized according to current NLNAC standards, and incorporates measurable levels of achievement; a stronger focus on the collection, aggregation, and analysis of relevant data over multiple years; and solid documentation of the ways in which assessment results are used for program improvement. The SPE is also an important component of our institutional strategic planning and assessment processes, in which all nursing faculty members are involved.

We aspire to the high standards of NLNAC, and we are firmly committed to seeking accreditation from the organization again at the earliest opportunity. Dr. Sharon Tanner, Executive Director for NLNAC who personally visited CVCC to evaluate our nursing program, has strongly encouraged our submission of a candidacy packet and Self Study Report. It is anticipated that both of those preparatory steps will be completed during the current academic year, which would enable us to host another site visit during the Fall 2011 Semester and to be eligible for accreditation shortly thereafter.

Please let me know if you desire additional information concerning our AAS programs in criminal justice, nursing, or other fields of study at CVCC. We look forward to seeing you at the SACS Annual Meeting in Louisville and the workshop for Track A institutions in January.

Sincerely,



Philip Cleveland, Ed.D.
Acting President

PCC/GL/mg

cc: Dr. G. Jack Allen
Dr. Greg Labyak

Enclosures