

Summary Report on Nursing Program Grade Changes

May 15, 2018

Submitted to the Board of Trustees, Coastal Bend College
By Matilda Saenz, PhD, Interim Vice President of Instruction and Economic Development

Introduction: As Chief Academic Officer at CBC, it has come to my attention that the Registrar, Candy Fuller and Assistant Dean Loana Hernandez under the auspices of Dean Julia Garcia and Executive Dean Lupe Ganceres made and/or condoned unauthorized changes to grades in the course offerings fall 2017 in the LVN Nursing Program.

Data: A total of 228 grade forms were submitted to my office by the Admissions/Registrar's Office for my signature during January and February of 2018. Please see the one page of data "Courses in Nursing with Grade Changes Fall 2017" attached which lists specific courses/numbers of students affected. These students were informed at the end of the fall semester that they could not return in the spring due to their failing grades. Although eight students' grades were changed from an "F" to a "D" or better, only four students were invited back. Students must pass *all* classes to advance to the next level. The other four students had not passed all their classes.

Questions Submitted by the VPIED: Attached is a copy of an official Memorandum "Grade Change Data and Questions" dated March 28, 2018 and sent via campus mail to Assistant Dean Loana Hernandez seeking answers to questions regarding the grade changes. Ms. Hernandez chose not to respond to the questions as well as her supervisor Dean Julia Garcia and the Executive Dean of Student Services, Lupe Ganceres who supervises the Registrar and who were both copied in the Memorandum. All of these employees have been insubordinate; however, no discipline notice was filed due to their continued support by the CBC President Dr. Espinoza.

Grade Forms: 228 grade forms were submitted to the Registrar without faculty signature and without my signature (see examples attached with student names redacted). A small number of these forms were signed

by two of the nursing instructors. The three instructors who refused to sign the grade change forms have resigned from CBC; they are no longer employed at the college. They resigned due to the coercion and due to the discipline notices given for signature given to two of these instructors for not completing exam item analysis which are not required either by CBC or the Board of Nursing (BON). However, the nursing faculty did complete an item analysis and with the additional analyses performed by Ms. Hernandez, some students were the beneficiaries of two upgrades.

Registrar: It is disconcerting that the CBC Registrar Candy Fuller changed the students' grades as noted in the forms stamped and dated as processed by the Registrar without faculty signatures and before presented to the office of the VPIED. The lack of integrity and professionalism displayed by the Registrar and her office is beyond expectations of any institution of higher education. This activity cannot be sanctioned by the Board or by anyone in the Administration of CBC. Ms. Fuller did not respond to a Memorandum "Grade Changes for Courses in Nursing Fall 2017" submitted to her with the unsigned Grade Change forms Please see attached an attached copy dated March 28, 2018 in which some of my concerns are expressed. Ms. Fuller as Ms. Hernandez chose not to respond to the Memorandum and no communication has taken place regarding these grade changes between the Registrar, Dean Julia Garcia, Executive Dean Lupe Ganceres and the Office of the VPIED.

Faculty Resignations and Impact on Students: It is important to note that four full-time Nursing Faculty in the LVN program have resigned since January 2018. Our CBC students will bear the brunt of the departure of these seasoned and experienced faculty members. Students have few resources for complaining due to the Nursing Program Student Handbook's (see page 7 attached) strict instructions to follow the Chain of Command: Dean Julia Garcia, Dean of Workforce (4th Step), followed by President of CBC Dr. Espinoza (5th Step). No Vice President of Instruction mentioned in this Chain of Command; thus no buffer for the obvious nepotism. Also within this structure the faculty are routinely omitted from the curriculum development process, from making decisions whether to re-retest or not, and other important nursing program decisions which should be the faculty's purview. It is unfortunate that the poor management, lack of integrity and professionalism exhibited by Dean Garcia and Assistant Dean Loana Hernandez have given the program not only bad press in the city newspaper but also in the surrounding community. The Nursing Program has been severely damaged by the ineptitude of these supervisors.

HESI Grade Results*: On its first administration this spring, only 21 students passed the HESI examination, a 99% predictor of success in the National Council Licensure Examination (NCLEX) for nursing students. The original score set as a passing rate for this examination was 900 but after so few students passed in the first administration the score was changed to 850 on the morning of the second administration which enabled more students to pass the HESI. According to nursing instructors, the original passing score varies from year to year. A passing score of 850 was indicated to students at the beginning of the cohort; however, in December/January an Addendum was presented to students for signature increasing the passing score to 900 only to be rescinded in April.

Conclusion: The findings reported in this Summary represent a lack of respect for an institution of higher education, its faculty and its students. Faculty authority in the classroom must be maintained in preserving a college's integrity, its mission and its commitment to students and the community of taxpayers and stakeholders. This situation is unhealthy, should have never happened and should never be repeated in the history of Coastal Bend College.

*Capstone Computerized Comprehensive Exam (From the *CBC Nursing Student Program Handbook 2017-2018*)

The passing score of the computerized comprehensive exam (Example: HESI, ATI, etc.) is based on the current probability of passing the NCLEX examination at the 87-90% range. The student will have two opportunities to pass the comprehensive exam. If the exam is passed on the first attempt, the student will receive a grade of 100 for that category of the clinical grade. If the student passes the exam on the second attempt, the student will receive a grade of 80 for that category of the clinical grade. If the student does not pass the exam after the second attempt, the student will receive a grade of 0 for Capstone Computerized Comprehensive Exam.

Courses in Nursing with Grade Changes Fall 2017

Note: Final (?) Submission of forms from Dean Julia Garcia to Dr. Matilda Saenz on **March 8, 2018 at 5:00 p.m.** (Spring Break begins March 9 at 5:00 p.m.)

Course Rubric	Title	Section	Number of Grade Changes	# of Duplicate forms	Actual number of changes without duplicates	Students changed from failing to passing	Date of Process by CBC Registrar
VNSG 1230	Maternal-NeoNatal Nursing (OB)	041	41	9	32	5	Vary from 1/18-2/18
		061	26	0	26	0	
		071	34	1	33	2	
VNSG 1234	Pediatrics (Pedi)	041	6	1	5	0	Vary from 1/18-2/18
		061	6	0	6	0	
		071	3	0	3	0	
VNSG 1329	Medical-Surgical Nursing I (MS)	041	1	0	1	0	Vary from 1/18-2/18
		061	2	0	2	0	
		071	3	0	3	1	
VNSG 1331	Pharmacology (Pharm)	071	4	1	3	0	Vary from 1/18-2/18
VNSG 2431	Advanced Nursing Skills (ANS)	041	41	9	32	0	Vary from 1/18-2/18
		061-063	27	0	27	0	
		071	34	1	33	0	
Totals			228	22	206	8	

Compiled by Dr. Matilda Saenz March 9, 2018

Important Notes:

1. Grade Change Forms submitted to Registrar by Loana Hernandez without faculty notification or signatures. Grade changes varied from 13 points to 1 point.
2. Forms signed by faculty were coerced by Loana Hernandez, Assistant Dean.
3. Faculty who refused to sign Grade Change Forms were given/threatened with a "discipline notice" to sign for non-compliance with item analysis of Fall 2017 exams.
4. Loana Hernandez affixed her digital signature in the faculty signature line and/or in the Dean's signature line and submitted to Registrar without Dean/VPI signatures.

Courses in Nursing with Grade Changes Fall 2017 (Continued)

5. Forms sent to Dr. Matilda Saenz by Admissions were sent to Dean Julia Garcia for Dean's signature and were returned signed by Dean Garcia without faculty signatures nor with any note or comment attached.
6. **Only grade changes authorized by Faculty signature should be changed by the Registrar.** The CBC Grade Change form also includes after the faculty signature, signature by the Dean followed by the Vice President of Instruction.
7. **Faculty resignations due to intimidation by Loana Assistant Dean and Dean.**
8. **Special Note:** Any college diploma has the statement "upon recommendation of the faculty." Faculty are the final authority with grade changes in their class.

Matilda Saenz, PhD
Interim Vice-President of
Instruction and Economic
Development



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MEMORANDUM

TO: Loana Hernandez, Assistant Dean of Allied Health

FROM: Matilda Saenz, PhD
Interim Vice President of Instruction and Economic Development

DATE: March 28, 2018

SUBJECT: Grade Change Data and Questions

See the attached data regarding the *Courses in Nursing with Grade Changes Fall 2017* compiled from the Grade Change forms that Admissions and Dean Garcia have submitted to the Office of the Vice President of Instruction. There remain many unanswered questions regarding your rationale for the grade changes, the large number of grade changes submitted and processed by the Registrar and the negligence exhibited in not following grade change procedures.

As the "Chief Academic Officer," oversight and evaluation of the curriculum and ensuring "academic excellences" are part of my job description. From my perspective what seems to have transpired here is outside the realm of an Assistant Dean and is violation of the integrity of the Nursing Program and the authority of the faculty.

For the record, we need to have questions answered regarding the grade changes you submitted.

1. What is the rationale behind changing so many grades in the Nursing Program? Is it to build enrollment or to keep enrollment up in Nursing? Or, to satisfy a grant?
2. The faculty indicated they did perform these item analyses and chose not to adjust grades because the questions represented information the students should have known. So your item analyses represents an unwarranted "upgrade" for the students most affected--those who failed the course(s) and were admitted back into the Nursing Program and those whose grades improved more than a letter grade.
3. Why were these item analyses not performed in December before the end of the Fall semester? Students who were informed in December not to return in January due to failing grades could have prepared to return to the program instead of receiving a phone call/email after the Spring 2018 semester had already started that they could in fact return to class.
4. When did you conduct the 30% analyses? And what procedure did you use? Per site? Per course?

Matilda Saenz, PhD
Interim Vice-President of
Instruction and Economic
Development



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5. Did you complete a comprehensive 30% item analyses for each course, for each student? How did you proceed? It seems that you had no supervision in this process? Who checked or verified your work?
6. At what point, if at all, did you notify the faculty members that you were in the process of filling out grade change forms? Were they informed via email, via text message, in person or on the phone?
7. **The most concerning issue, from my perspective, is that the Registrar changed the grades without faculty signatures in the Faculty Signature line.**
8. Did you authorize the Registrar to make these grade changes without the faculty signatures or did someone else? Dean Garcia? I find it doubtful that the Registrar would make these grade changes without the proper signatures.
9. If the proper procedures for grade changes had been followed, the Grade Change forms should have originated with the faculty, who would then submit the grade change forms to the Dean, followed by the Dean submitting them to the Vice President of Instruction who would in turn submit the forms to the Registrar for processing and changing the students' transcripts.
10. **None of the procedures detailed in #9 took place.** About 80% of the forms that were submitted to this office had no faculty signature, some had your digital signature in the faculty signature line--you are NOT the faculty member. You have no authority to sign in the faculty signature line. This is a lie at best and potentially fraud at worst.
11. The Registrar stamped the date of processing on most of the grade change forms--clearly with no faculty signature. Various dates are stamped on the grade change forms; with some students having as many as two forms per the same course filled in and stamped on different dates by the Registrar.
12. Why is this the case? Why were some students' forms submitted to the Registrar for stamping and processing more than once? Did you not keep a strict record of which students' grades were being changed? Did you follow some arbitrary guidelines to complete student grade change forms? Were all of the students enrolled in the Fall 2017 classes given the benefit of your 30% item analyses.
13. This entire scenario with Grade Changes is unprecedented during my tenure in higher education. You need to provide answers to these questions for the sake of our students, our faculty and the integrity of the Nursing Program.

Thank you for your attention to this very important matter.

C Dean Julia Garcia
Executive Dean Lupe Ganceres
Dean Mark Secord

Grade Change Form

Semester Fall

Year 2017

Student Name [REDACTED]

Social Security Number [REDACTED] or CBC ID # [REDACTED]

Course VNSG 1331

Section 071

Flex Course No

Change grade from 60(F) to 73(D)

Date 1/17/18

Loana Hernandez Digitally signed by Loana Hernandez
Date: 2018.01.22 22:21:56 -0500

Instructor Signature

Date 2/21/18

[Signature]
Dean Signature

Date _____

Vice President Signature

Reason for Change Analysis performed on all exams and grade adjusted accordingly.

Signature [Signature]

SUBMIT



Coastal Bend College does not discriminate on the basis of race, creed, color, national origin, gender, age, or disability

Revised 8/2017

CRC 1-60

Grade Change Form

Semester Fall

Year 2017

Student Name [REDACTED]

Social Security Number [REDACTED] or CBC ID # [REDACTED]

Course VNSG 1234

Section 041

Flex Course No

Change grade from 75 (C) to 76 (C)

Date _____

Date 1/28/18

Date _____

Instructor Signature
Julia L Garcia 1/21/18
Digitally signed by Loana Hernandez
Loana Hernandez
Date: 2018.01.28 10:16:39 -0500

Dean Signature

Vice President Signature

Reason for Change Analysis made on all exams and adjustments made accordingly.

Registrar
Signature [Signature]

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Grade Change Form

Semester Fall

Year 2017

Student Name [REDACTED]

Social Security Number: [REDACTED]

or

CBC ID # [REDACTED]

Course VNSG 1230

Section 071

Flex Course No

Change grade from 79 (C) to 80 (B)

Date _____

Date 1/29/18

Date _____

Reason for Change _____

Instructor Signature
Julia I Garcia
Loana Hernandez
Digitally signed by Loana Hernandez
Date: 2018.01.29 07:54:03 -0500

Dean Signature

Vice President Signature

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Grade Change Form

Semester Fall

Year 2017

Student Name [REDACTED]

Social Security Number [REDACTED] or CBC ID # [REDACTED]

Course VNSG 1230 Section 061 Flex Course No _____

Change grade from 88 (B) to 92 (A)

Date _____

Date 1/28/18

Date _____

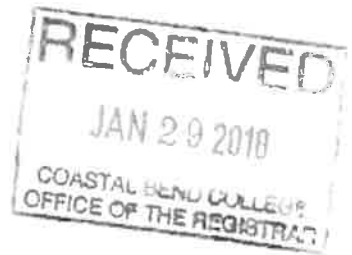
Instructor Signature
Loana Hernandez 1/21/18
Loana Hernandez
Digitally signed by Loana Hernandez
Date: 2018.01.28 16:39:06 -0500

Dean Signature

Vice President Signature

Reason for Change Analysis made on all exams and adjustments made accordingly.

SUBMIT




Processing 2-13-18
Signature [Signature]

CBC 1-94

Matilda Saenz, PhD
Interim Vice President of
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Development



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TO: Candy Fuller, Registrar
FROM:  Matilda Saenz, PhD
Interim, Vice President of Instruction and Economic Development (VPIED)
DATE: March 28, 2018
SUBJECT: Grade Changes for Courses in Nursing Fall 2017

An unusual number of grade change forms have been submitted to the Office of the Registrar by the Workforce Assistant Dean Loana Hernandez during January through February 2018. My review of multiple Grade Change forms submitted *directly* to the Vice President of Instruction and Economic Development (VPIED) from the Office of the Registrar (Admissions) disclosed:

1. Grade changes processed and stamped by the Registrar's office without faculty signatures
2. Grade change forms signed only by Loana Hernandez, Assistant Dean of Allied Health
3. Grades changed as much as 13 points in several instances
4. Grade changes enabled 8 students to move from a failing grade to a passing grade
5. 228 grade change forms for nursing courses submitted during this time period.

When these Grade Change forms were received by my office, these forms were submitted to Dean Julia Garcia for her signature. These Grade Change forms included in the attached Addendum A through E now include Dean Garcia's signature. Also attached is a compilation entitled "Courses in Nursing With Grade Changes Fall 2017" listing the Courses and the number of Grade Changes made: a total of 228.

Only grade changes directly submitted by the faculty with their signature should be processed by the Office of the Registrar. In addition, if the grade change process is followed correctly, the grade changes are processed when all of the required signatures are affixed to the form in this order: Faculty, Dean, Vice President of Instruction and Economic Development.

Circumstances regarding these grade changes without faculty signature and in most cases without the corresponding dean signatures are highly irregular and unethical. They most assuredly represent an effort to build enrollment in the Nursing programs. These grade changes evidence an affront to the institutional authority that belongs only to the faculty.

C Julia Garcia, Dean of Workforce
Lupe Ganceres, Executive Dean of Student Services
Mark Secord, Dean of Academics

**Coastal Bend College Nursing Program
Organization and Administration
Chain of Command**

Nursing student concerns/complaints are to be addressed in the order of the following chain of command:

1 st Step	<u>Alice</u> Course Instructor	<u>Beeville</u> Course Instructor	<u>Kingsville</u> Course Instructor	<u>Pleasanton</u> Course Instructor
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2 nd Step	<u>Alice</u> Lead Instructor	<u>Beeville</u> Lead Instructor	<u>Kingsville</u> Lead Instructor	<u>Pleasanton</u> Lead Instructor
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3 rd Step	Director of Nursing Education
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4 th Step	Dean of Workforce
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5 th Step	President of Coastal Bend College
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6 th Step	CBC Board of Trustees
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