

**Proposal to Establish A New Nursing Education Program
Abilene Christian University, Abilene, Texas
Baccalaureate Degree Nursing Education Program**

Summary of Request:

Consider the Abilene Christian University (ACU) proposal to establish a new baccalaureate degree nursing (BSN) education program in Abilene, Texas. The final revised proposal was made available online to members of the Board. A notice of public hearing has been posted (See Attachment #1).

Historical Perspective:

- ACU is a private, master's level university founded in 1906 and located on a 250-acre, modern campus in Abilene, Texas.
- Currently ACU has over 4500 students and offers baccalaureate degrees in one hundred twenty-five (125) major areas of study, and master's degrees in twenty-five (25) graduate majors. In addition, one (1) doctoral degree in ministry is offered.
- ACU has been granting the BSN for thirty (30) years as a part of the Patty Hanks Shelton School of Nursing (PHSSN) consortium with partners, Hardin Simmons University and McMurry University.
- In 2010 ACU announced the intent to discontinue the affiliation with PHSSN and to offer the full BSN program on their campus.
- ACU proposes establishing a separate BSN program housed on the ACU campus with a planned initial enrollment of fifty (50) students.
- The present BSN program through PHSSN is designed for students to complete the first two years of general education requirements in their home campus and join students from the other two universities in the junior year in studies at the PHSSN facility.
- The proposed BSN program provides the nursing curriculum on the ACU campus beginning in the junior year.
- The proposed ACU BSN program consists of one hundred thirty-one (131) semester credits, with students being accepted into the nursing major in spring of the sophomore year to begin nursing courses in the junior year.
- An initial cohort of fifty students (50) in Fall 2013 would graduate from the program in May 2015.
- After the program receives full approval from the Board, they anticipate an annual enrollment of two cohorts of forty (40) students.
- ACU is requesting approval at this time because they are ending their relationship with the consortium and want to assure prospective students that they will begin the new program in the fall of 2013. This assurance will allow them to begin actively recruiting students and accept applications in the spring of 2013 for fall enrollment.

Summary of Proposal:

Overview of the Proposal:

- The proposed ACU BSN program consists of one hundred thirty-one (131) semester credits, with a plan for students to be accepted into the nursing major in the spring of the sophomore year to begin nursing courses in the junior year.
- An initial cohort of fifty students (50) in Fall 2013 would graduate from the program in May 2015.
- After the program receives full approval from the Board, they anticipate an annual enrollment of two cohorts of forty (40) students.
- ACU has been accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS), the regional accreditation body, since 1951.
- A prospectus has been submitted to SACS concerning the beginning of the new program, and a receipt of the notification letter is included in the proposal.
- A complete substantive change was not required by SACS because of the previously offered BSN through the consortium.
- In addition, ACU was accredited by the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (CCNE) as a part of the consortium of PHSSN.
- ACU plans to reapply for CCNE accreditation as a separate entity from PHSSN.

Rationale and Need for the Program:

- ACU has been successful in BSN education through their participation in the consortium that is approved as PHSSN by the BON.
- The decision to establish a separate program with all program requirements offered solely on the ACU campus is partially based upon their view that they can provide a higher level of education with a lower percentage of attrition.
- ACU is a traditional liberal arts university and many students from many other states and countries study to prepare them to fill professional positions in their home communities or in other countries.
- ACU administration find that students choose ACU for their college education because of the Christian environment and principles. This is interpreted by ACU as a demand for a nursing program at ACU. The enrollment of ACU students in the PHSSN program has increased during the past five (5) years.
- The two (2) large medical centers in Abilene project an increase in jobs for registered nurses (RNs) during the next five (5) years.
- The two (2) facilities also indicated that there will be available clinical placement for all students, especially during off-peak hours.
- Letters of support from many key community leaders are included in the proposal.

Administration and Organization:

- Representatives of ACU administration have been communicating with Board Staff since their decision to develop a separate program on their campus.
- The administration at ACU value their awarding of the BSN and have validated that the mission of the nursing program is congruent with the overall mission of the university.
- The administration has committed full support for the development of the full BSN program on the ACU campus and continuing support to sustain the program.
- Sufficient funds are projected in the budget for fully equipped facilities to house the BSN program.
- ACU's recent financial history demonstrates a pattern of financial stability.
- The director of the nursing program will report directly to the Provost.
- Susan Kehl, RN, PhD, CNE as the first author of the proposal and projected director. Her move to another state required a search for another proposed director. Becky S. Hammack, EdD, MSN, BSN was recruited by ACU to continue with proposal develop and to assume the director role.
- Dr. Hammack is experienced in professional nursing education and has served as program director and as faculty member. She also is experienced in nursing practice.

Faculty:

- The program has identified eight (8) potential qualified nursing faculty.
- One doctorally-prepared faculty has been hired to begin in January 2013 and one Master's-prepared faculty member enrolled in a PhD in nursing program began in August 2012. Both are experienced nursing educators.
- Since ACU requires that full-time tenure track and tenured faculty maintain membership in the Church of Christ, ACU seek to recruit through nationally distributed church-related publications.
- A nursing faculty workload policy has been developed that will allow faculty time for course-related work and faculty organization responsibilities.
- The Faculty Handbook has been reviewed and found to be in compliance with required rules related to faculty policies and faculty organization. It also includes information to guide the faculty members in their teaching roles.

Students

- The program plans for an initial enrollment of fifty (50) students per year until a cohort has graduated and attained at least an 80% pass rate on the NCLEX-RN examination.
- When the program is fully approved by the BON, they plan to enroll two cohorts of forty (40) students each at two (2) points during the academic year.
- ACU recruitment involves a collaborative effort of four (4) teams: recruiting, enrollment services, enrollment marketing, and analytics.
- Freshmen students may declare nursing as a major and may be admitted to the nursing program for their junior year if all admission requirements are met, including the sixty (60) credit hours of general education, core, and nursing prerequisites.
- Transfer students may be admitted depending upon evaluation of their previous course work and fulfilling ACU university requirements.
- The Student Handbook has been reviewed and found to be in compliance with required student policies and information related to eligibility issues.

Program of Study:

- The mission of the ACU School of Nursing is to inspire and educate students for excellence in professional practice in preparation for Christian leadership and service as nurses throughout the world.
- The curriculum was developed from concepts derived from the *BON Differentiated Essential Competencies (DECs) of Baccalaureate Nursing Education*, the *AACN Essentials of Baccalaureate Education*, and the *Quality and Safety in Nursing Education (QSEN, 2011) competencies*.
- Curriculum requirements include a broad base of pre-nursing general education requirements and liberal arts requirements that must be met by all ACU graduates.
- The program learning outcomes provide the foundation for the clinical evaluation tools utilized in each clinical course.
- The curriculum is designed for progression through four (4) levels of clinical education, each building upon the previous level.
- The curriculum is sound, logically organized and meets all requirements of the rule.
- The BSN program will have a strong clinical focus in a variety of urban and rural settings across the continuum of care (acute, critical, and community.)
- An optional international community clinical experience is being studied.
- The program is being designed to prepare graduates to continue their education for graduate degrees.

Clinical Learning Experiences:

- Each clinical course will include both simulation and practice in appropriate clinical settings.
- Each clinical course correlates to a didactic/classroom course in the four major content areas of medical/surgical, maternal/child, pediatrics, and mental health with a 3:1 clinical to classroom ratio. The total number of clinical hours is 990.
- A thorough description of each course and planned clinical experiences is detailed in the proposal.
- There are twenty-six (26) signed commitments from clinical agencies to provide opportunities to students for clinical learning experiences.
- The clinical evaluation tools indicate variation, distinctions, and progression of expectations of students across the curriculum.
- The program will utilize flexible schedules using Fridays, Saturdays, and Mondays, as well as evenings and nights as the schedule requires.
- ACU plans to collaborate with other nursing programs in the area to optimize clinical schedules among programs.

Facilities, Resources, and Services:

- Pre-nursing students are currently enrolled in prerequisite nursing courses and in ACU required core courses but no students will be enrolled in the required nursing courses until Fall 2013. The first cohort will be accepted during the Spring 2013 semester to begin in Fall 2013.
- The nursing facilities including skills and simulation laboratories will be prepared in Spring 2013 using funds set aside for the construction and equipping.
- ACU is requesting Board approval pending completion of the construction and a site visit by Board Staff in July 2013.
- Physical facilities for the general education and prerequisite courses and student services are in place at ACU. Board Staff have visited ACU during recent visits to PHSSN and can verify that the campus is appropriate and adequate for the nursing program to be housed at ACU.
- Photographs of the Zona Luce Building on campus that will house the nursing program are provided in the proposal. Construction has been delayed since another discipline is presently occupying the building and will be relocating to a new space in December 2012.
- Students, faculty, and staff will have direct access to printed information and internet-based resources which support student learning and goal attainment.
- Through the Abilene Library Consortium, the ACU community will have access to materials from Hardin-Simmons University, McMurry University, Howard Payne University, and the Abilene Public Library.
- ACU also participates in TexShare, a cooperative program incorporating academic libraries, public libraries integrated in regional systems, and libraries of clinical medicine.
- The ACU library already purchases several databases for current BSN students at PHSSN, such as CINAHL + Full-Text Plus, ProQuest Nursing and Allied Source, the Cochrane Library, and the Lippincott/Springhouse Nursing Collection of eBooks.
- A full range of student support services are available on the ACU campus.

Records and Reports:

- Secured filing cabinets for faculty and student files are available.
- Record retention policies of ACU will be followed.

Total Evaluation Plan:

- The program's total evaluation plan follows the CCNE evaluation format and includes the required components to meet Rule 215.13.

Pros and Cons:

Pros:

- Administration support the new BSN program at Abilene Christian University and have provided adequate funding for reconstruction of a campus building for the nursing program.
- The administration at ACU is familiar with nursing education.
- Opportunities for clinical learning experiences in the community are available and adequate.
- Two experienced, qualified nursing faculty are in place, and additional qualified candidates are interested in ACU.
- The resources and physical spaces will provide an excellent educational environment.
- The Nursing Department Director is qualified and has many years of experience in professional nursing education and in nursing practice.
- Student and Faculty Handbooks are in place with required policies.
- The planned curriculum has been designed using the DECs, the AACN Essentials, and the QSEN.

Cons:

- None noted.

Staff Recommendation:

Move to grant initial approval to Abilene Christian University Baccalaureate Degree Nursing Education Program in Abilene, Texas, with a Fall 2013 enrollment of fifty (50) students, and an ongoing annual enrollment of fifty (50) students until the program has received full approval. based upon the proposal, contingent upon the completion of construction, and pending a site visit by Board Staff in July 2013 (See letter in Attachment #2).

BOARD OF NURSING FOR THE STATE OF TEXAS
333 Guadalupe Street, Suite 3-460
Austin, Texas 78701-3942

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING
for
Consideration of a Proposal from Abilene Christian University
To Establish A
Baccalaureate Degree Nursing Education Program
in Abilene, Texas

Date and Time: January 17, 2013 at 2:00 PM
Place: Hobby Building
333 Guadalupe Street
Lobby, Room 100
Austin, Texas

The Board will hear testimony from individuals who wish to present information concerning the proposal.
Written testimony will also be considered and should be received in the Board's office by January 3, 2013.

Address written testimony to:
Katherine Thomas, MN, RN, FAAN, Executive Director
Texas Board of Nursing
333 Guadalupe Street, Suite 3-460
Austin, Texas 78701-3942

DRAFT LETTER

January 21, 2013

Becky S. Hammack, EdD, MSN, RN
Abilene Christian University
School of Nursing
ACU Box 29103
Abilene, Texas 79699-9103

Dear Dr. Hammack:

At the January 17, 2013 meeting, members of the Texas Board of Nursing (BON or Board) discussed the Abilene Christian University Proposal to Establish a New Baccalaureate Degree Nursing Education Program in Abilene, Texas. The members of the Board wish to thank you and -----, for being present to answer questions.

As indicated by the enclosed order, it was the Board's decision to grant Initial Approval status to the Abilene Christian University Baccalaureate Degree Nursing Education Program, Abilene, Texas, and to allow a Fall 2013 enrollment of fifty (50) students and an annual enrollment of fifty (50) additional students until the program is on full approval.

Congratulations and best wishes.

If you have questions, or if we may be of assistance, please contact board staff at (512) 305-6814.

Sincerely,

Kathy Shipp, MSN, RN, FNP
President of the Board

Janice I. Hooper, PhD, RN, Nursing Consultant for Education

copy: Southern Association of Colleges and Schools
Provost at ACU

**Texas Board of Nursing
333 Guadalupe Street, Suite 3-460
Austin, Texas 78701-3942**

BEFORE THE BOARD OF NURSING
IN AND FOR THE STATE OF TEXAS

In the matter of the proposal of Abilene Christian University
in Abilene, Texas

For approval to implement a Baccalaureate Degree Nursing Education Program

ORDER OF THE BOARD

TO:

The Board of Nursing in and for the State of Texas in a regularly scheduled meeting, held on the 17th day of January 2013, considered the proposal for authority to implement a Baccalaureate Degree Nursing Education Program and obtain Approval from the Board, pursuant to Section 301.157, Texas Occupations Code.

At the meeting, Kathy Shipp, MSN, RN, FNP, President of the Board, presided and the following members were present:

Nina Almasy, MSN, RN, Representing LVN Education
Deborah Hughes Bell, CLU, ChFC, Consumer Member
Patricia Clapp, BA, Consumer Member
Tamara Cowen, MN, RN, Representing Practice
Sheri Denise Crosby, JD, SPHR, Consumer Member
Marilyn J. Davis, RN, BSN, MPA, Representing Practice
Shelby Ellzey, Consumer Member
Richard Robert Gibbs, LVN, Representing Practice
Kathy Leader-Horn, LVN, Representing Practice
Mary LeBeck, MSN, RN, Representing ADN Programs
Beverly Jean Nutall, LVN, Representing Practice
Verna Kathleen Shipp, APN, RN, Representing Advanced Nursing Practice

The Board reviewed the proposal of the above school and after having discussed the proposal in an open public meeting, the Board makes the following findings:

FINDINGS

1. That a written proposal has been filed with said Board.
2. That a public meeting on said proposal was held to take testimony and evidence by the Board.
3. That the written proposal does meet the minimum requirements for proceeding with the development of an approved program offering a Baccalaureate Degree in Nursing.

ORDER

NOW THEREFORE, IT IS ORDERED THAT, the proposal of the Abilene Christian University is approved having been found to comply with minimum requirements for establishing a Generic Baccalaureate Degree Nursing Education Program to prepare professional nurses.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED THAT THE aforementioned school is authorized to proceed to implement a professional nursing education program and prior to admission of students, all requirements of Chapter 215 Professional Nursing Education shall be met.

DATED THIS 21st day of January 2013.

THE BOARD OF NURSING IN AND
FOR THE STATE OF TEXAS

Seal

By:

Kathy Shipp, MSN, RN, FNP
President