

**Consideration of Change in Approval Status
From Full Approval to Full Approval with Warning
University of Texas Health Science Center at San Antonio in San Antonio, Texas
Baccalaureate Degree Nursing Education Program**

Summary of Request:

Consider the proposed change in approval status for the University of Texas Health Science Center at San Antonio (UTHSC-SA) Baccalaureate Degree Nursing (BSN) Education Program in San Antonio, Texas, from Full Approval to Full Approval with Warning based upon the 2015 NCLEX-RN® examination pass rate, findings in the 2015 Self-Study Report, and compliance with Rule 215.

Historical Perspective:

- The UTHSC-SA BSN program has been in operation since 1969.
- Eileen Breslin, PhD, RN, FAAN has served as Dean of the program since April 2008.
- The university is regionally accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges with the next reaffirmation scheduled in 2018. The BSN program is accredited by the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education through December 31, 2021.
- The NCLEX-RN® examination pass rates for the past five (5) years are included in the table below:

Examination Year	BON Approval Status	NCLEX-RN® Examination Pass Rate	Number of First Time Candidates (Passed/Total)
2015	Full	79.73%	240/301
2014	Full	78.49%	270/344
2013	Full	83.54%	269/322
2012	Full	84.67%	232/274
2011	Full	88.99%	194/218

- Due to the 2014 NCLEX-RN® examination pass rate of 78.49%, the Program Director and faculty were required to submit a Self-Study Report (SSR) in 2015 that would evaluate factors that may have contributed to the graduates' performance on the

NCLEX-RN® examination and a description of the corrective measures to be implemented.

- The Education Consultants conducted a conference call with the Program Director and faculty members on February 26, 2015, to discuss the process of developing the SSR. A comprehensive, in-depth SSR was received in the Board office on April 14, 2015.
- The Program Director and faculty members identified factors in the SSR that may have contributed to the decline in the pass rate and designed the following corrective measures:
 - Increase the passing score of the Test of Essential Academic Skills (TEAS-V) to 65;
 - Strengthen the current faculty recruitment plan;
 - Continue to strengthen the faculty development efforts;
 - Utilize a single pedagogy across program tracks to maximize faculty effectiveness;
 - Initiate a Student Success Center;
 - Clarify the readmission policy to support a two-course failure dismissal;
 - Complete curriculum mapping against the NCLEX-RN® test plan;
 - Redesign clinical experiences with more time in planned simulation activities and creative instructional activities in skills lab;
 - Review and revise clinical evaluation tools for ease of use, clarity, leveling, and standard expectations of behaviors; and
 - Evaluate policies and practices to ensure full utilization of Assessment Technologies Institute (ATI) materials.
- On November 12, 2015, the Education Consultants and the Director of Nursing conducted a telephone conference with the Program Director concerning changing the program's approval status from Full Approval to Full Approval with Warning at the Board meeting on January 21, 2016. The conference call provided an opportunity for Board Staff and Dr. Breslin to discuss the process and implications of the warning status.
- The UTHSC–SA BSN Program has provided a response letter to be included with the Board report (See Attachment #1).

Rationale for Recommendations:

Rule 215.4(c)(3)(A) states: “A warning may be issued to a program when the pass rate of first-time NCLEX-RN® candidates ... is less than 80% for two (2) consecutive years...”

The Education Guideline for writing a Self-Study Report requires that “The effects of the corrective measures should be evaluated as a part of the Total Program Evaluation Plan”.

Staff Recommendation:

Move to change the approval status for the University of Texas Health Science Center at San Antonio Baccalaureate Degree Nursing Education Program in San Antonio, Texas, from Full Approval to Full Approval with Warning based upon the 2015 NCLEX-RN® examination pass rate, findings in the 2015 Self-Study Report, and compliance with Rule 215 (See Attachment #2).

Office of the Dean
www.nursing.uthscsa.edu

December 14, 2015

Dr. Virginia D. Ayars
Nursing Consultant for Education
Texas Board of Nursing
333 Guadalupe Street, Ste. 3-460
Austin, Texas 78701

Re: UTHSCSA School of Nursing's Progress Since April 2015 Self-Study Report on Evaluation of Factors that Contributed to Graduates' Performance on the NCLEX-RN® Examination in RY 2014

Dear Dr. Ayars:

Thank you for the opportunity to respond and inform you of the actions taken since our April 2015 self-study report to support student performance on the NCLEX-RN® examination. The following report will discuss the corrective measures implemented to address the complex factors influencing students' first-time pass rates.

The information on corrective measures is organized by the following focus areas identified in the list of potential contributing factors in our self-study report:

- 1. Students**
 - a) Admission criteria
 - b) English proficiency
 - c) Remediation and academic support strategies
 - d) Readmission policies
- 2. Policies Governing Use of External Assessment and Remediation**
 - a) Use of ATI testing
- 3. Teaching and Evaluation Methods for Class and Clinical**
 - a) Relationship between student grades and passing or failing the NCLEX-RN® examination
 - b) Evaluation of grade inflation
 - c) Course testing policies and procedures
- 4. Curriculum**
 - a) Gap analyses against NCLEX_RN® Test Plan
 - b) Review of BSN curriculum by senior faculty
 - c) Effectiveness of clinical evaluation tools and adequacy of faculty documentation of clinical evaluation tools
- 5. Faculty**
 - a) Faculty development
 - b) Faculty workload and teaching assignments
- 6. Improvements to Learning Environment**

Thank you for the opportunity to update you on our efforts. Please contact me if you have any questions.

Sincerely,



Eileen T. Breslin, PhD, RN, FAAN
Dean & Professor
Dr. Patty L. Hawken Nursing Endowed Professor

1. Students

The following items are corrective measures taken among student factors related to admission criteria, English proficiency, and remediation strategies in support of student performance on the NCLEX-RN® examination. Faculty and administration in the School of Nursing will continue to evaluate these components for predictiveness of NCLEX-RN® success for future cohorts.

a) Admission Criteria

The School of Nursing instituted a requirement that applicants to the BSN program, regardless of track, must complete all required Math and Science prerequisite courses prior to the time of application. Applicants are required to demonstrate a minimum Math and Science GPA of 3.0. Data below presents a comparison of Math and Science GPAs between graduated cohorts that entered the BSN program prior to this new requirement and cohorts admitted after the requirement went into effect.

- Math and Science GPA of graduated cohorts admitted and matriculated prior to implementation of new admission criterion
 - Fall 2014 graduates: 3.36
 - Spring 2015 graduates: 3.36
 - Summer 2015 graduates: 3.39
- Math and Science GPA of new matriculated cohorts admitted under the new admission criterion
 - Fall 2014 admits: 3.50
 - Spring 2015 admits: 3.51
 - Summer 2015 admits: 3.41

In Fall 2014, the Associate Dean for Admissions and Student Services commissioned a study by the ATI research team to examine our Test of Essential Academic Skills (TEAS) version V institutional data for students who failed one or more courses to determine the relationship of TEAS V scores and success in the BSN program. Prior to the commissioned study, the UTHSCSA SON did not use an official cutoff score as part of the admissions process. Based on the analysis of the ATI research team's findings, the faculty approved the implementation of a TEAS V composite score cutoff of 65% as part of the admissions profile for new applicants. The data below presents an updated comparison of the average of TEAS composite scores between graduated cohorts that entered the BSN program prior to the implementation of the minimum cutoff score of 65% and cohorts admitted after the new admission requirement went into effect.

- Average of TEAS composite scores for graduated cohorts admitted and matriculated prior to implementation of a minimum cutoff score of 65%
 - Fall 2014 graduates: 75.5
 - Spring 2015 graduates: 77.1
 - Summer 2015 graduates: 82.5
- Average of TEAS composite scores for new matriculated cohorts admitted under the new admission requirement of a minimum cutoff score of 65%
 - Fall 2014 admits: 80.6
 - Spring 2015 admits: 80.2
 - Summer 2015 admits: 85.9

b) **English proficiency**

Anecdotal reports from faculty and students suggested English as a second language may be a contributing factor to student academic performance and eventual success or failure on the NCLEX-RN® examination. Faculty agreed to institute minimum required scores for English language testing among international applicants and score reports must be no older than 2 years. For the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) a minimum score of 550 is required on the paper examination, a minimum 250 on the computer-based examination, or a minimum 68 on the internet based examination. For the International English Language Testing System (IELTS) a minimum score of 6.5 is required. The data below presents the number of international students graduated in 2014-2015 and their subsequent performance on the NCLEX-RN® examination. The School of Nursing is continuing efforts to identify mechanisms for collecting and analyzing ESL data and NCLEX-RN® performance to determine correlations and any statistical significance that can inform corrective measures to admission criteria as well as remediation strategies.

- Number of International students graduated in 2014-2015 and their performance on NCLEX-RN®
 - Fall 2014: No international graduates
 - Spring 2015: Four (4) graduates
 - 1 international graduate, no TOEFL required as came from a local community college. Student passed the NCLEX-RN® examination
 - 1 *DACA student; Failed NCLEX-RN® examination
 - 1 *DACA student; Failed NCLEX-RN® examination two times
 - 1 *DACA student; Passed NCLEX-RN® examination
(*undocumented Deferred Action for Childhood Arrival (DACA) students who do not require TOEFL scores for admissions at this time)
 - Summer 2015: No international graduates

c) **Remediation and academic support strategies**

In Fall 2014, the UTHSCSA SON initiated a Student Success Center (SSC) to further centralize efforts to support student retention and success in the program. The SSC's Director of Academic Enhancement implements and evaluates various student assessment measures to determine risk for failure and to develop individualized strategic plans for the students' success. One risk assessment measure used to predict a student's academic success is the Reading sub-score from the TEAS V. As part of this risk measure, a cutoff score of 69% is used to identify students who could complete the Weaver intensive reading program. During the piloting of this requirement (Spring, Summer and Fall of 2015), students had the option whether to complete the Weaver program or not based on their risk assessment. It was noteworthy that although the Weaver program was recommended and encouraged, students chose not to participate in the program. Therefore, it is now a requirement. Effective Spring 2016, students with a TEAS V Reading sub-score of 69% or below will be required to complete the Weaver intensive reading program before beginning their undergraduate coursework. The following data indicates the number of students identified at or below the 69% Reading sub-score and the number of students assigned to the Weaver intensive reading program.

- Number of students identified at or below a 69% TEAS V Reading sub-score
 - Spring 2015: 15
 - Summer 2015: 1
 - Fall 2015: 2
 - Spring 2016: 5
- Number of students who chose to take the Weaver intensive reading program
 - Spring 2015: 2
 - Summer 2015: 0
 - Fall 2015: 0
 - Spring 2016: 5 (Weaver now required)

Other academic support initiatives implemented by the Student Success Center (SSC) in 2014-2015 include peer mentoring as well as personal tutoring and supplemental instruction for targeted courses, particularly those that exhibit the highest number of D's, F's and W's awarded as final grades to students.

Peer Mentoring Activities (Launched Spring 2015)

- Launched the Peer Mentoring program with sixteen (16) 2nd semester BSN students selected to be peer mentors for the new Spring 2015 BSN admits in the Traditional Track.
- Developed and offered training program for Peer Mentors prior to Spring 2015 New Student Orientation. Incorporated the peer mentors into the newly revamped New Student Orientation program.
- Coordinated learning communities and peer mentor assignments. Clinical groups were assigned peer mentors for ongoing mentoring throughout first semester.
- Offered monthly peer mentor meetings for planning mentoring activities and discuss student contact reports.
- Planned two large Peer Mentoring events including a Breakfast Event before the new students' first exam in Pathophysiology and a Clinical Panel event prior to the start of clinical for new students. A small group activity for learning communities was encouraged for mentoring programming.
- In Summer 2015, nine (9) peer mentors were assigned to new admits for the Accelerated Track. The mentors were presented to the class and sent initial contact emails to learning communities.

Supplemental Instruction (Launched Fall 2014)

- Selected, hired and trained nine (9) Supplemental Instruction (SI) Leaders in Fall 2014, fourteen (14) SI Leaders in Spring 2015, and three (3) SI Leaders in Summer 2015. Monthly trainings were provided and were mandatory for all SI Leaders.
- Provided Supplemental Instruction (SI) to students in 15 courses in the traditional and accelerated tracks. The total final graded enrollment for these courses was 1,882 with 902 individual students participating in Supplemental Instruction (44.8%) between the fall and spring semesters. The total number of sessions offered was 236 sessions. The student contact hours provided by SI Leaders totaled 5,772 hours. The total mean course grade for courses supported with Supplemental Instruction was 3.06. Notably, the DFW rates were lower for students attending the Supplemental Instruction sessions at 27 (3%) students than for those who did not attend SI sessions at 47 (5%) students.

Personal Tutoring (Launched Fall 2014)

- Selected, hired and trained five (5) Personal Tutors in Fall 2014 and six (6) Personal Tutors in Spring 2015. These students were solely Personal Tutors and were not serving in a dual position as SI Leaders. In Summer 2015, the SI Leaders served as personal tutors as well.
- Provided 263.75 total contact hours among six undergraduate courses that included NURS 3204: Health Assessment, NURS 3207 Care of Childbearing Families, NURS 3309 Pathophysiology, NURS 3304 Pharmacotherapeutics, NURS 3330 Foundations of Clinical Nursing Practice, and NURS 3303 Concepts of Professional Nursing. The NURS 3309 Pathophysiology course had the most contact hours with 149 hours among 83 students. The NURS 3207 Care of Childbearing Families course had the second most contact hours with 61.5 hours among 39 students.
- Out of the total number of students there was only one (1) student who was unsuccessful. The remaining students earned a passing grade of 'A' or 'B' as the final course grade.

In October 2015, the SSC also received a \$2.5 million, five-year grant through the U.S. Department of Education for developing Hispanic-Serving Institutions. The grant will be used to develop programs under the SON's proposed *Realce: Academic Skills Enhancement for South Texas Nurses* project that will provide solutions to two key problems faced by the school: 1) improving academic support programs to reverse the downward trend of first-time pass rates on the NCLEX-RN[®] examination, and 2) the need for improved instruction by novice faculty to address the needs of culturally diverse populations and the need to increase faculty-student engagement opportunities – especially for the low-income and first-generation students served by the SON. Enhancing student learning through focused academic support programs, increased undergraduate research, and more culturally inclusive, narrowly-tailored faculty development will not only promote students' success to degree completion and licensure examination, but also have the direct benefit of producing a more competent and diverse nursing force to serve local communities. The activities currently underway are as follows.

- **Enhance Student Success and Student Engagement**
 - Continue to support the use of Supplemental Instruction and Personal Tutoring to enhance student learning as measured by student performance in nursing courses and by first-time pass rates on the NCLEX-RN[®] examination.
 - Enhance academic skills through academic coaching to improve non-cognitive skills for success in nursing school.
 - Enhance student engagement in the SON as measured by student participation in peer mentoring and the whole family engagement programs and financial literacy events under development.
 - Invest in enhanced technology for early identification of at-risk students to make informed decisions and provide targeted interventions and resources

- **Enhance Undergraduate Research and Faculty Development**
 - Increase participation in undergraduate research in the SON through the development of the SUNRISE (Summer Undergraduate Nursing Research Immersion Experience) program. Eligible students will participate in an 8-week summer research experience mentored by SON faculty under an apprenticeship model with the goal of developing skills to conduct research from the origination of ideas to analysis and reflection of study results.
 - Improve faculty instructional skillsets to improve student learning and enhance faculty—student interaction. This will be achieved through the use of the grant money to develop faculty workshops designed to specifically address shortages in instructional ability that are self-identified by the faculty. Undergraduate instructors will be more likely to attend these sessions as they will have direct input in identifying the topics of discussion and suggesting speakers they feel would be beneficial to the SON community.

d) **Readmission policies**

In addition to remediation and academic support strategies, the SON has reevaluated policies related to what happens to students after they earn a failing grade in a course. In 2013, the undergraduate readmission policy was clarified to indicate that students who earn a D, F, or WF in two required nursing courses (or from the same course twice) will be dismissed academically from the undergraduate nursing program and will be ineligible for readmission. In December 2015, the Committee on Undergraduate Studies (COUS) approved a motion to add language to the readmission policy that clarifies the process for students to petition for reinstatement (as differentiated from readmission) after their second failure, per guidance from UTHSCSA Legal Affairs. Clarification of the differences between readmission and reinstatement have been disseminated to faculty.

The following data indicates: 1) the number of graduates who failed two courses and were readmitted by the Admission, Progression and Graduation Committee prior to the Spring 2013 policy update and subsequently failed the NCLEX-RN® examination; and 2) the number of graduates who failed only one course in the BSN program and went on to fail the NCLEX-RN® examination.

- **Number of BSN graduates who failed two courses and were readmitted by APG prior to the Spring 2013 policy change and subsequently failed the NCLEX-RN®**
 - 2-course failure readmits graduated in Fall 2014 = Resulted in one NCLEX-RN® failure
 - 2-course failure readmits graduated in Spring 2015 = 0 NCLEX-RN® failures
 - 2-course failure readmits graduated in Summer 2015 = 0 NCLEX-RN® failures

- **Number of BSN graduates who failed only one course in the BSN program and failed the NCLEX-RN®**
 - Summer 2014 graduates with one course failure = One (1) NCLEX-RN® failure
 - Fall 2014 graduates with one course failure = Four (4) NCLEX-RN® failures
 - Spring 2015 graduates with one course failure = One (1) NCLEX-RN® failure; one other student remaining to test.
 - Summer 2015 graduates with one course failure = One (1) NCLEX-RN® failure so far. Awaiting test results of remaining students in this cohort who had one course failure.

Faculty are determining what mechanisms need to be in place to assist the students who have failed one course in order to ensure their future success. Such mechanisms include mandated use of the Student Success Center.

2. Policies Governing Use of External Assessment and Remediation

a) Use of ATI testing

Review and evaluation of ATI policies and practice has occurred. Currently, recommended changes in policy are moving through the governance process. As of Fall 2014, students purchase the NCLEX-RN® Live Review course at the end of their program of study as part of their total tuition costs. In December 2015, the Committee on Undergraduate Studies (COUS) approved a motion to implement the use of the newly revised ATI Content Mastery Series and Comprehensive Assessment and Review Program/Exam Policy. The policy contains information on full integration of ATI materials, includes using the Content Mastery Exam as a portion of the course exam grades and also identifies a target score for the ATI Content Mastery Predictor exam.

The two tables that follow present students' course numerical grades by track correlated to their scores on corresponding ATI Content Mastery examinations as of data received November 2015. This data has been updated as of November 2015.

Data in the Traditional Track indicates that when students have higher grades in the nursing courses, there was a *moderate to strong* tendency for students to have significantly higher scores on 7 of the 8 ATI content mastery exams that correspond to 9 courses. As expected in our April 2015 self-study report, there continues to be a lack of significant relationship between the ATI Community Health exam and NURS 4317.

Data Correlation for Traditional Track – Academic Year 2015

Correlation of Students' Course Numerical Grades to Scores on Corresponding ATI Content Mastery Examinations – Traditional Track			
ATI Content Mastery Exam	Corresponding Courses in the Traditional Track	Pearson Correlation	
		Letter	Numeric
Fundamentals	NURS 3201: Foundations Clinical Nursing Practice: Theory	0.54	--
Adult Medical-Surgical	NURS 4311: Care of the Adult I: Theory	0.52	0.60
Adult Medical-Surgical	NURS 4315: Care of the Adult II: Theory	0.60	0.60
Content Pharmacology	NURS 3304: Pharmacotherapeutics	0.53	--
Maternal-Newborn	NURS 3207: Care of Childbearing Families: Theory	0.61	0.54
Nursing Care of Children	NURS 4210: Child and Family Health: Theory	0.54	0.53
Mental Health	NURS 3205: Psychiatric and Mental Health Nursing: Theory	0.43	0.60
Community	NURS 4317: Population Focused Health: Theory	0.14	-0.02
Leadership	NURS 4319: Leadership and Management: Theory	0.47	0.54

Note: Pearson correlations range from -1.00 to 1.00. Correlations between .20 - .49 are categorized as having *Moderate* magnitude, whereas correlations of .50 or greater are categorized as having *Strong* magnitude. Positive values show that variables share similar patterns and as values increase, similarity of the patterns between variables is assumed to be stronger.

Data correlation in the Accelerated Track indicates that when students had higher grades in their nursing courses, there was a *moderate to strong* tendency for students to have significantly higher scores on 7 of the 8 ATI content mastery exams that correspond to 9 courses. As expected in our April 2015 self-study report, there continues to be a lack of significant relationship between the ATI Community Health exam and NURS 4327.

Data Correlation for Accelerated Track – Academic Year 2015

Correlation of Students' Course Number Grades to Scores on Corresponding ATI Content Mastery Examinations - Accelerated Track			
ATI Content Mastery Exam	Corresponding Courses in the Accelerated Track	Pearson Correlation	
		Letter	Numeric
Fundamentals	NURS 3330: Foundations Clinical Nursing Practice: Theory	0.54	--
Adult Medical-Surgical	NURS 4501: Disease Management I: Theory	0.35	0.76
Adult Medical-Surgical	NURS 4502: Disease Management II: Theory	0.46	0.72
Content Pharmacology	NURS 3365: Pharmacotherapeutics	0.66	--
Content Pharmacology	NURS 4111: Pharmacotherapeutics: Disease Management II	0.43	0.56
Maternal-Newborn	NURS 3372: Family Nursing Care: Theory	0.38	0.55
Nursing Care of Children	NURS 3372: Family Nursing Care: Theory	0.55	0.53
Mental Health	NURS 3274: Psychiatric and Mental Health Nursing: Theory	0.68	0.30
Community	NURS 4327: Population Focused Health: Theory	0.30	0.03
Leadership	NURS 4329: Leadership and Management: Theory	0.48	0.51

Note: Pearson correlations range from -1.00 to 1.00. Correlations between .20 - .49 are categorized as having *Moderate* magnitude, whereas correlations of .50 or greater are categorized as having *Strong* magnitude. Positive values show that variables share similar patterns and as values increase, similarity of the patterns between variables is assumed to be stronger.

3. Teaching and Evaluation Methods for Class and Clinical

There is an ongoing review of course grades. Prior analysis indicated that students who failed the NCLEX-RN[®] examination had significantly lower final grades in select courses throughout their program of study. As previously stated, the Student Success Center and the Committee on Undergraduate Studies (COUS) are jointly considering what formal strategies need to occur for students who fail a course.

Further analysis of the courses that did not yield significant differences as a function of the NCLEX-RN[®] test results indicated an association with grade inflation. The COUS has taken corrective measures to change grading criteria.

Additionally, in December 2015, the faculty committee approved a motion to change the grading scale in the undergraduate program.

<u>Existing grading scale</u>	<u>New grading scale</u>
A = 4 points (90-100)	A = 4 points (92-100)
B = 3 points (80-89)	B = 3 points (83-91)
C = 2 points (70-79)	C = 2 points (75-82)
D = 1 point (60-69)	D = 1 point (66-74)
F = 0 points (59 or below)	F = 0 points (65 or below)

Students must earn a grade of 'C' or above in a required nursing courses in order to progress to the next required course in the sequence or for graduation.

The COUS also approved a motion to change the cumulative weighted average exam score for passing from 70% to 75% within the School of Nursing. Now for a student to pass a course, he or she must have a weighted average of 75% on all exams and the final exam weighted average will not be rounded mathematically. These changes in grading scale and cumulative weighted average exam scores will be implemented for the Fall 2016 cohort. Exam rigor is also being addressed through the increased education of the faculty.

a) Relationship between student grades and passing or failing the NCLEX-RN[®] examination

The Committee on Undergraduate Studies (COUS) in collaboration with the Student Success Center are developing a formal remediation policy for students identified as at-risk by the correlations between their course grades and ATI Content Mastery scores that have been identified as predictors for risk of failure on the NCLEX-RN[®].

The following tables present data as of November 2015 for students graduating in 2014-2015 that indicate the relationship between grades in didactic nursing courses and whether a student passed or failed the NCLEX-RN[®] in the Traditional Track and Accelerated Track. Course letter grades were converted to numbers with A = 4, B = 3, C = 2, D/F = 1. Numeric grades for courses are scored on a scale from 0-100. Scores in bold font and highlighted reflect significant group differences ($p < .05$).

Data for Traditional Track – Academic Year 2014-2015

Traditional Track Curriculum Data for Didactic Courses for Students Graduating Fall 2014-Fall 2015 and Cohorts Who Tested in Reporting Year 2015				
Course Numbers and Course Names			NCLEX-RN® Result	
			Pass	Fail
Semester One				
NURS 3303	Concepts of Professional Nursing	Letter	3.68(0.48)	3.47(0.51)
		Numeric	85.19(5.78)	82.12(4.64)
NURS 3309	Pathophysiology	Letter	3.58(0.51)	3.05(0.45)
		Numeric	--	--
NURS 3204	Health Assessment: Theoretical Foundations	Letter	3.54(0.51)	3.19(0.40)
		Numeric	87.23(5.38)	83.04(4.43)
NURS 3330	Foundations of Clinical Nursing Practice: Theoretical	Letter	3.46(0.55)	2.95(0.46)
	<i>(previous course number was NURS 3201)</i>	Numeric	--	--
NURS 3304	Pharmacotherapeutics	Letter	3.30(0.62)	2.81(0.52)
		Numeric	--	--
NURS 3375	Research and Evidence-Based Practice	Letter	3.63(0.56)	3.41(0.55)
	<i>(previous course number was NURS 3402)</i>	Numeric	89.19(6.36)	89.09(3.73)
NURS 3205	Psychiatric and Mental Health Nursing: Theoretical	Letter	3.78(0.42)	3.46(0.50)
		Numeric	90.20(4.47)	87.79(3.67)
NURS 3207	Care of Childbearing Families: Theoretical Foundations	Letter	3.19(0.64)	2.58(0.50)
		Numeric	83.03(6.15)	77.74(5.32)
NURS 4311	Care of the Adult I: Theoretical Foundations	Letter	2.83(0.53)	2.30(0.46)
		Numeric	82.49(5.01)	77.03(4.26)
NURS 4315	Care of the Adult II: Theoretical Foundations	Letter	3.26(0.62)	2.68(0.47)
		Numeric	85.63(5.55)	80.14(3.82)
NURS 4210	Child and Family Health: Theoretical Foundations	Letter	2.94(0.64)	2.38(0.54)
		Numeric	81.92(5.38)	75.71(3.87)
NURS 4317	Population Focused Health: Theoretical Foundations	Letter	3.62(0.49)	3.48(0.51)
		Numeric	86.11(5.43)	84.27(4.70)
NURS 4319	Leadership and Management: Theoretical Foundations	Letter	3.27(0.59)	2.90(0.43)
		Numeric	86.21(5.24)	82.21(4.12)
Graduating Nursing GPA			3.39(0.36)	2.97(0.20)

Data for Accelerated Track – Academic Year 2014-2015

Table 1: Accelerated Track Curriculum Data - Didactic Courses for Students Graduating Fall 2014-Fall 2015 and Cohorts Who Tested in Reporting Year 2015				
			NCLEX-RN® Result	
Course Numbers and Names		Grade Type	Pass	Fail
Semester One				
NURS 3270	Professional Socialization	Letter	3.43(0.67)	3.18(0.39)
		Numeric	-	-
NURS 3370	Pathophysiology	Letter	3.39(0.65)	3.18(0.64)
		Numeric	87.22(7.28)	84.36(6.54)
NURS 3272	Health Assessment and Promotion: Theoretical Foundations	Letter	3.41(0.58)	3.18(0.64)
		Numeric	86.07(4.78)	85.30(6.26)
NURS 3330	Foundations of Clinical Nursing Practice: Theoretical Foundation	Letter	3.71(0.49)	3.24(0.56)
		Numeric	--	--
NURS 3365	Pharmacology	Letter	--	--
		Numeric	88.60(4.88)	82.45(4.18)
NURS 3374	Research and Evidence-Based Practice	Letter	3.99(0.12)	4.00(0.00)
		Numeric	89.17(6.50)	90.75(5.98)
NURS 3274	Psychiatric and Mental Health Nursing: Theoretical Foundations	Letter	3.74(0.45)	3.40(0.52)
		Numeric	90.26(4.09)	85.86(4.27)
NURS 3372	Family Nursing Care: Theoretical Foundations	Letter	3.39(0.50)	3.00(0.00)
		Numeric	83.99(4.77)	78.46(2.57)
NURS 4501	Disease Management I: Theoretical Foundations	Letter	3.26(0.47)	2.94(0.24)
		Numeric	88.91(3.86)	85.21(2.21)
NURS 4502	Disease Management II: Theoretical Foundations	Letter	3.43(0.53)	2.94(0.43)
		Numeric	81.95(4.25)	77.45(2.59)
NURS 4111	Pharmacotherapeutics: Disease Management II	Letter	3.55(0.50)	3.29(0.59)
		Numeric	90.78(3.97)	89.17(4.04)
NURS 4329	Leadership and Management: Theoretical Foundations	Letter	3.46(0.56)	3.12(0.49)
		Numeric	87.55(4.97)	83.79(4.18)
NURS 4327	Population-Focused Health: Theoretical Foundations	Letter	3.73(0.48)	3.71(0.47)
		Numeric	93.97(5.39)	94.90(3.05)
Graduating Nursing GPA			3.52(0.30)	3.23(0.21)

b) Evaluation of grade inflation

The following tables present the grades of graduated students for courses associated with grade inflation in the Traditional Track and the Accelerated Track.

Data for Traditional Track – Fall 2014 through Fall 2015

Grades of Graduated Students Between Fall 2014 and Fall 2015 for Courses Associated with Grade Inflation in the Traditional Track								
Semester Graduated	Semester of course	# of students	Traditional Track Course Number and Name	Grade of A	Grade of B	Grade of C	Students Failed	Students Withdrawn
Fall 2014	F13	87	NURS 3375 Nursing Research and Evidence-Based Practice (previously NURS 3402)	83.91%	14.94%			1.15%
Fall 2014	F13	0	NURS 3304 Pharmacotherapeutics	No Data				
Fall 2014	F14	83	NURS 4317 Population Focused Health	84.34%	15.66%	0	0	0
Spring 2015	S14	136	NURS 3375 Nursing Research and Evidence-Based Practice	80.15%	17.65%	1.47%	0	.74%
Spring 2015	S14	133	NURS 3304 Pharmacotherapeutics	30.08%	52.63%	15.79%	.75%	.75%
Spring 2015	S15	138	NURS 4317 Population Focused Health	42.75%	55.07%	0	2.17%	0
Fall 2015	F14	122	NURS 3375 Nursing Research and Evidence-Based Practice	79.50%	20.50%	0	0	0
Fall 2015	F14	123	NURS 3304 Pharmacotherapeutics	38.21%	46.34%	15.45%	0	0
Fall 2015	F15	TBD*	NURS 4317 Population Focused Health	TBD*	TBD*	TBD*	TBD*	TBD*

* Data in this table collected as of November 2015. Fall 2015 graduates and grades to be determined (TBD) after the submission of this report response.

Data for Accelerated Track – Summer 2015

Grades of Students Graduated in Summer 2015 for Courses Associated with Grade Inflation in the Accelerated Track								
Semester Graduated	Semester of course	# of students	Accelerated Track Course Number and Name	Grade of A	Grade of B	Grade of C	Students Failed	Students Withdrawn
Summer 2015	Su15	90	NURS 4327 Population Focused Health	61.11%	36.67%	2.22%	1.25%	0
Summer 2015	F14	91	NURS 3374 Nursing Research and Evidence-Based Practice	96.7	2.20	0	0	1.10%
Summer 2015	F14	91	NURS 3365 Pharmacology	43.96	50.55	4.40	0	1.10%

Table Comments

In comparison to where we were in the April 2015 self-study report, faculty are seriously considering changing the course assignments and reevaluating rigor. Given the attention we are placing in reviewing these grades and providing faculty feedback, we are observing a trend in less grade inflation with the more recent classes. Faculty are paying more attention to how they conduct group grading in assignments and their exam rigor.

c) **Course testing policies and procedures**

In December 2015, the Committee on Undergraduate Studies (COUS) approved a new testing policy to not allow students to return to test questions on exams taken through ExamSoft or ATI once the items have been answered. The rationale for this change is to provide a testing setting that is similar to the NCLEX-RN® examination to further prepare students in what to expect on the actual exam.

The School of Nursing is committed to enforcing academic integrity among all students as it reflects students' ability to acquire and uphold professional standards of behavior during their time in the program as well as in their future nursing careers. Testing security measures are considered a subset of academic integrity. Given recent events related to breaches in testing security, it was clear that students were not demonstrating optimal academic integrity. Strategies are needed to restore and support the honesty and reliability of student performance on examinations. The list below presents corrective actions taken to address insufficient test security.

• **Corrective actions to address insufficient test security**

- Privacy screens required for all students
- New faculty guidelines for proctoring
- Increased number of proctors
- In 2014, the SON hosted renowned academic integrity scholar, Dr. Jim Lang, to provide a full-day faculty development seminar for SON faculty. Since then, the faculty has developed a working group within the Faculty/Student Matters Committee to implement the strategies and suggestions Dr. Lang provided after meeting with the faculty. Corrective measures in 2015 resulting from this seminar include:
 - Students sign a code of professional conduct at time of admission
 - Implementation of an academic honor code that students sign with every exam
 - Increased emphasis on academic integrity at student orientation

In addition to the improvement of testing security, the April 2015 self-study report also revealed inconsistencies in the development of course examinations that test the proper cognitive domain levels necessary to demonstrate mastery on the NCLEX-RN® exam. An analysis of test blueprints for courses in both tracks against the NCLEX-RN® Test Plan is also revealing gaps in exam item coverage. The list below presents corrective measures taken to address these issues.

• **Corrective measures to improve inconsistencies in exam development and evaluation**

- Twelve (12) faculty are currently engaged in test-writing development with an ATI consultant
- In May 2015, faculty approved a standardized format for the Exam Blueprint used for each course exam beginning in academic year 2015-2016. A standardized format that reflects the current NCLEX-RN® Test Plan and considers the cognitive domain of each item will help overcome gaps that have developed for exam item coverage which prevents true measure of achievements of quality benchmarks at appropriate domain levels. As part of this policy, the Exam Blueprint must be clearly posted for students at the beginning of a course in the course packet and in the course online portal to demonstrate alignment with course objectives.
- Current review of exam items for coverage of NCLEX-RN® Test Plan and appropriate cognitive domain leveling of items by course and track are underway with all reviews to be completed and submitted to the Committee on Undergraduate Studies (COUS) by December 2015.
- Benchmarks for exam result statistics were established and voted on in COUS in May 2015. Item analysis data will be used in order to effectively measure outcomes of changes made to exam blueprints. The benchmarks are as follows:

Difficulty: 50-85%	Discrimination:	Point Biserial Correlation Coefficient:	Kuder Richardson:	Distractor Evaluation:
% who answered question correctly	Goal is .25 and above; negative numbers are a red flag.	Goal is .20 and above; negative numbers are a red flag.	Goal is .50-.70 or above.	Not chosen/ chosen above answer should be reviewed / revised / replaced.
	Ranking students according to total score - selecting the top 27% and the lowest 27% - selection per item	Correlation between right and wrong item choice and all choices on the exam / student	Reliability extent to which students taking the exam again would achieve the same scores	

- Faculty approved the initiation of a formal review and tracking process for revisions to exam blueprints for historical and continuity purposes. Faculty are also considering a proposal to establish a test review committee to support the reliability and continuity of changes made to testing measures in a course over time and its impact on student performance.
- Faculty are exploring the inclusion of both formative and active evaluation activities in each course that enhance application/clinical reasoning and that decrease reliance on high stakes testing.
- An interactive student teaching module on exam-taking strategies and evidence-based study methods was developed and provided to the Accelerated Track students who graduated in August 2015. Student feedback was strong. The module will be formatted for use at orientation and reinforced across semesters and can be provided on an ongoing basis to graduating classes.

4. Curriculum

a) Gap analyses against NCLEX-RN® Test Plan

As of July 2015, the faculty also completed curriculum gap analyses of all courses in the Traditional and Accelerated tracks against the NCLEX-RN® Test Plan to determine content items students are not clearly exposed to in their studies. Those gaps have been addressed and are continuing to be evaluated.

b) Review of BSN curriculum by senior faculty

In alignment with corrective measures to address the issues in teaching and evaluation methods and grade inflation, significant attention has also been given to the BSN curriculum and senior faculty have been assigned to review courses. The following list presents the actions taken.

• **Corrective Strategies to Enhance Curriculum**

- In May 2015, faculty committees approved the adoption of a standard single pedagogy (content-based teaching strategy) for use across program tracks to maximize teaching consistency and faculty effectiveness.
- In November and December 2015, large group conversations were held for faculty to come together and collaborate on questions, concerns and change ideas related to the curriculum. Conversations are ongoing. In particular, sequencing of courses remains a topic of discussion.

- Nine (9) senior faculty have been asked to review the syllabus for select courses in their areas of expertise in both the Traditional and Accelerated tracks. These faculty are nationally recognized, hold senior rank, and have a wealth of teaching experience. The list below presents the areas of expertise each senior faculty is covering in their review of the syllabi throughout the curriculum:
 - o Dr. Sara Gill: Maternal Child
 - o Dr. Carole White: Adult Health
 - o Dr. Ken Miller: Health Assessment
 - o Dr. Julie Novak: Pediatrics
 - o Dr. Janie Canty-Mitchell: Leadership and Management
 - o Dr. Carrie Jo Braden: Research
 - o Dr. Karine Crowe: Community
 - o Dr. Linda Porter-Wenzlaff: Foundations
 - o Dr. Cynthia O’Neal: Professional Concepts

As part of the peer review of syllabi, senior faculty are considering the following questions:

- o Does the content reflect BSN Essentials?
- o Do the assignments elevate the student’s thinking to demonstrate synthesis of course content?
- o Are the readings essential, current and appropriate for the course?
- o Are there appropriate distribution of assignments in the course to reflect student’s progress?
- o Is the validation of learning appropriate?
- o Is the course designed to take into account multiple learning styles?

c) **Effectiveness of clinical evaluation tools and adequacy of faculty documentation of clinical evaluation tools**

The clinical evaluation tool is used to judge a student’s competencies (knowledge, skills and attitudes) in the clinical arena (both authentic clinical environments and the laboratory). Assessment of the student during clinical experiences is based on repeated observation of student behavior and a compilation of data regarding behavior that is compared to a set of standards (the evaluation tool) in order to arrive at a judgment regarding the student’s progress toward achieving clinical course objectives. Clinical evaluations are designed to be ongoing with both formative and summative components. Faculty are expected to provide ongoing student feedback including a formative mid-clinical evaluation, as well as a summative clinical evaluation. Student input throughout the evaluation process is expected.

- **Corrective actions to address efficacy of clinical evaluation tool and faculty documentation of evaluation of clinical practice learning**
 - Identified and installed the Clinical Evaluation Tool (CET) Task Force, a subset of the Committee on Undergraduate Studies (COUS), effective July 2015.
 - Review and revise clinical evaluation tools for ease of use, clarity, leveling and standard expectations of behaviors. A draft of the new tool is under construction by the CET Task Force. The revised tool will be constructed in Nursing Process format with the integration of the Differentiated Essential Competencies (DECs) and alignment with QSEN, TIGER and TeamSTEPPS competencies so that it will dovetail with the changes to be made to establish cohesion to the nursing process formats the students are taught in the class and clinical. This alignment will reinforce the process and more fully support clinical reasoning.
 - Developing a faculty inter-rater reliability plan.

- Susan Luparell will be coming in January 2015 to discuss optimizing civil learning environments.
- In Fall 2015, the faculty committees approved revisions to the preexisting 2-day campus orientation and 3-hour SON department orientation for new faculty. The new comprehensive orientation plan provides longer periods of focus on faculty transition and includes one day entirely dedicated to clinical orientation and one day focused on face-to-face orientation in curriculum and teaching. In addition, modules for self-study or guided study will be developed for thirteen (13) faculty foci areas such as pedagogy, course coordinator roles, school policies, student evaluation, ATI use, etc. with the expectation that new faculty will successfully complete all modules by the end of their first month of employment.
- In support of the more focused faculty orientation plan, a standardized assessment for incoming faculty needs is being developed to ensure faculty receive appropriate and sufficient orientation.
- Formal education courses were opened to faculty in Summer and Fall 2015 to address faculty development related to curriculum and teaching by tying course assignments to program and track courses the faculty teach to maximize the impact and faculty time utilized. While the course was promoted to faculty, only two individuals expressed serious interest in the course offerings and only one registered which did not allow the course to move forward. The interested faculty were still assisted with their areas of concerns. They were provided major reading sources and some additional materials they could independently study at their pace.
- The two Vice Chairs of the faculty departments have been engaged in formal mentoring processes with new faculty on a monthly basis as it relates to teaching.
- Twelve (12) faculty members were financially supported by the School of Nursing (SON) to attend the Texas Board of Nursing “Excellence in Clinical Instruction in Pre-Licensure Nursing Education” workshop in 2015. The workshop engaged clinical faculty through dissemination and discussion of the *Faculty Guide for Promoting Optimal Clinical Instruction* (3.8.7.a. Education Guideline) and offering state and national updates germane to clinical nurse educators.
- The SON invested \$35K to support faculty participation in an ATI test writing workshop with individual Virtual Sessions scheduled for faculty in June 2015 and August 2015. To date, twelve (12) faculty have completed this workshop.
- Twelve (12) faculty have been supported to complete the NCSBN eLearning Online Test Development and Item Writing Course
- The SON hosted renowned academic integrity scholar, Dr. Jim Lang, to provide a full-day faculty development seminar for SON faculty.
- Faculty webinar on concerning classroom behavior hosted by Student Success Center (SSC).
- Faculty have access to free online webinars on teaching through AACN that are archived and faculty are encouraged by the SON to use them.
- The SSC is also beginning a conversation series focused on teaching and learning for today’s learner.
- For Spring 2016, plans are underway to use Title V funds recently acquired by the SSC to host a speaker on instructional strategies for at-risk populations

b) Faculty workload and teaching assignments

In addition to faculty development, the April 2015 self-study report revealed challenges related to faculty workload and teaching assignments. To provide more time for faculty to engage in curricular work, the Fall 2015 admission numbers were decreased from 130 to 102. As the SON continues to grow junior faculty, heavier dependence is placed on full-time senior faculty to orient and mentor new faculty while also engaging in curriculum development and participating in school and university governance. The senior faculty have been teaching in the graduate program and that enrollment has

decreased by another 35 students. Senior faculty are actively engaged in supporting junior faculty at the present time.

For fiscal year 2016, \$600,000 has been added to the state budget. The SON will use the additional monies to invest in the recruitment and hiring of qualified and doctorally prepared faculty. The school has hired a consultant to review faculty workload calculations, scheduling processes and faculty teaching assignments.

6. Improvements to Learning Environment

The April 2015 self-study report indicated student feedback on infrastructure and technology revealed issues in the learning environment. The School of Nursing has received financial commitment from the university to improve the SON building through the Tuition Revenue Bonds approved for UTHSCSA in the 84th Texas Legislative Session.

The university is also near completion of the new Academic Learning and Teaching Center, scheduled to open in Spring 2016. The center will include a state-of-the-art gross anatomy teaching facility and relieve learning space deficits by providing additional flexible classrooms and lecture halls to promote collaborative and interprofessional learning. Learning spaces throughout the center will also be equipped with the latest and most sophisticated technology to support 21st century learning needs.

Other corrective measures taken to improve learning environment issues in the School of Nursing (SON) include:

- SON Room 1.463 that has seating capacity for 96 students is being reconfigured with moveable tables and chairs and capability for students to project their work from their seating station to Apple TVs strategically placed around the room
- The SON is coordinating faculty and student training for the use of the new classroom instructional equipment in room 1.463.
- Better resolution high-definition 80-inch displays with dry erase boards installed in SON classrooms 2.350, 2.332 and 2.302.
- In Spring 2015, the SON increased the number of hours IT personnel are at the help desk in the school to support student needs
- In Fall 2015, began the migration of online course material from Blackboard Learning to the new CANVAS learning management system adopted by the university.
- The Committee on Undergraduate Studies (COUS) is developing a policy to address official guidelines regarding student use of laptops in classrooms (access and task behaviors) in order to ensure consistency among course faculty in classroom expectations for students.
- The SON upgraded all classroom computers in Summer 2014. We are currently evaluating faculty office equipment to determine currency and congruence with the classroom

The SON will continue to evaluate the outcomes of these corrective measures to determine their impact on student performance and faculty teaching.

DRAFT LETTER

January 25, 2016

Eileen Breslin, PhD, RN, FAAN, Dean
Baccalaureate Degree Nursing Education Program
The University of Texas Health Science Center at San Antonio
7703 Floyd Curl Drive
MC 7942
San Antonio, TX 78229-3900

Dear Dr. Breslin:

At the January 21-22, 2016 meeting, members of the Texas Board of Nursing (Board) discussed the approval status of the University of Texas Health Science Center at San Antonio Baccalaureate Degree Nursing Education Program in San Antonio, Texas, based upon the 2015 NCLEX-RN® examination pass rate, findings in the 2015 Self-Study Report, and compliance with Rule 215.

Based upon the discussion and review of information, it was the decision of the Board to change the approval status of the University of Texas Health Science Center at San Antonio Baccalaureate Degree Nursing Education Program in San Antonio, Texas, from Full Approval to Full Approval with Warning and impose the conditions and requirements in the attached Board Order.

If you have any questions or if we may offer assistance, please contact Board Staff at Virginia.ayars@bon.texas.gov or 512-305-7660.

Sincerely,

Katherine A.Thomas, MN, RN, FAAN
Executive Director

Copy: William L. Henrich, MD, MACP, President
Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education

BEFORE THE TEXAS BOARD OF NURSING

ORDER OF THE BOARD

In the Matter of
The University of Texas Health Science Center at San Antonio
Baccalaureate Degree Nursing Education Program
San Antonio, Texas

A public meeting of the Texas Board of Nursing, hereinafter referred to as the Board, was held on January 21, 2016, 333 Guadalupe, Tower II, Room 225, Austin, Texas, to consider the approval status of the University of Texas Health Science Center at San Antonio Baccalaureate Degree Nursing Education Program in San Antonio, Texas, pursuant to Section 301.157, Texas Occupations Code and 22 Tex. Admin. Code Chapter 215, based upon the 2015 NCLEX-RN® examination pass rate, findings in the 2015 Self-Study Report, and compliance with Rule 215.

Representatives from the University of Texas Health Science Center at San Antonio in San Antonio, Texas discussed the change in approval status during a conference call with Board Staff and were offered the opportunity to provide a written response for the Board's consideration. After review and due consideration of the materials presented by Staff and filed by the University of Texas Health Science Center at San Antonio in San Antonio, Texas, the Board hereby CHANGES the approval status of the University of Texas Health Science Center at San Antonio Baccalaureate Degree Nursing Education Program in San Antonio, Texas from FULL APPROVAL to FULL APPROVAL WITH WARNING and imposes the following conditions/requirements:

1. In accordance with Rule 215.4(a)(3)(A), a program survey visit will be conducted by Board Staff during 2016.
2. An evaluation of the effectiveness of the corrective measures outlined in the 2015 Self-Study Report is to be submitted by the program to Board Staff no later than June 1, 2016, per Education Guideline 3.2.1.a.

Entered this 21st day of January, 2016

Katherine A. Thomas, MN, RN, FAAN
Executive Director
On Behalf of the Texas Board of Nursing