

**Consideration for Change in Approval Status from Conditional to Full Approval  
 Western Governors University in Austin, Texas  
 Associate Degree Nursing Education Program**

**Summary of Request:**

Consider a proposed change in the program approval status for Western Governors University (WGU) Baccalaureate Degree Nursing (BSN) Education Program in Austin, Texas, from Conditional Approval to Full Approval based upon review of the 2016 NCLEX-RN® examination pass rate and compliance with Board Rule 215.

**Historical Perspective:**

- WGU BSN program was approved by the Board in July 2009.
- The WGU BSN program is delivered with an online curriculum with faculty supervised face-to-face skills labs, simulation labs, and hands-on patient care.
- Though the home campus is in Austin, the majority of the students live in the Dallas and Houston areas. Didactic content is delivered online and clinical practice is planned in settings near students' residences.
- Kimberly Kelly-Cortez, PhD, MEd, BSN, RN-BC, was appointed BSN program director in May 2016 following three (3) years of mentoring by Jan Jones-Schenk, DHSc, RN, NE-BC, WGU Chief Nursing Officer.
- WGU BSN program is accredited by the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (CCNE). The most recent program evaluation occurred in 2013. The next evaluation is scheduled for 2023.
- WGU is also accredited by the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities. The most recent program evaluation occurred in 2014. The next evaluation is scheduled for 2017.
- The NCLEX-RN® examination pass rates since the program began in Texas are included in the table below:

<b>NCLEX Examination Year</b>	<b>BON Approval Status</b>	<b>NCLEX-RN® Examination Pass Rate</b>	<b>Number of First Time Candidates (Passed/Total)</b>
2016	Conditional Recommend Change to Full Approval	96.00%	24/25
2015	Full with Warning	70.59%	12/17
2014	Full	71.43%	5/7
2013	Full	73.33%	11/15
2012	Full	87.50%	7/8

- WGU BSN program approval status was changed from Full with Warning to Conditional Approval at the January 2016 Board meeting. When a program is on Conditional Approval, they are prohibited from enrolling new students.
- WGU has made significant improvements to their program of study over the past two (2) years.
- Their 2016 NCLEX-RN® examination pass rate is 96.00%.

**Rationale for Staff Recommendations:**

The program has demonstrated a pass rate for first-time candidates of 96.00% on the 2016 NCLEX-RN® examination and is currently in full compliance with Rule 215. Since the program has met rule requirements, the change of approval status will allow the admission of new students.

**Staff Recommendation:**

Move to change the approval status for Western Governors University Baccalaureate Degree Nursing Education Program in Austin, Texas, from Conditional Approval to Full Approval as noted in the attached Board Order (See Attachment #1).

DRAFT LETTER

October 31, 2016

Kimberly Kelly-Cortez, PhD, MEd, BSN, RN-BC  
Baccalaureate Degree Nursing Education Program  
Western Governors University  
221 West 6<sup>th</sup> Street, Suite 1050  
Austin, Texas 78701

Dear Dr. Kelly-Cortez:

At the October 27-28, 2016 meeting, members of the Texas Board of Nursing (BON) discussed the approval status of the Western Governors University Baccalaureate Degree Nursing Education Program in Austin, Texas, based upon the 2016 NCLEX-RN® examination pass rate and compliance with Board Rule 215.

Based upon the discussion and review of documents, it was the decision of the Board to change the approval status of the Western Governors University Baccalaureate Degree Nursing Education Program from Conditional Approval to Full Approval.

If you have any questions or if we may be of any assistance, please contact Board Staff at [Janice.hooper@bon.texas.gov](mailto:Janice.hooper@bon.texas.gov) or 512-305-6814.

Sincerely,

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

copy: Jan Jones-Schwenk, DHSc, RN, NE-BC  
Collegiate Commission on Nursing Education  
Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities

**BEFORE THE TEXAS BOARD OF NURSING**

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**ORDER OF THE BOARD**

In the Matter of  
Western Governors University  
Baccalaureate Degree Nursing Education Program  
In Austin, Texas

A public meeting of the Texas Board of Nursing, hereinafter referred to as the Board, was held on October 27, 2016, 333 Guadalupe, Tower II, Room 225, Austin, Texas, to consider the approval status of the Western Governors University Baccalaureate Degree Nursing Education Program in Austin, Texas, pursuant to Section 301.157, Texas Occupations Code and 22 Tex. Admin. Code Chapter 215, based upon the NCLEX-RN® examination pass rate for 2016 and compliance with Rule 215.

After review and due consideration of the filed materials, as well as the presentation by representatives from Western Governors University Baccalaureate Degree Nursing Education Program in Austin, Texas, and other interested parties, if any, the Board hereby CHANGES the approval status of the Western Governors University Baccalaureate Degree Nursing Education Program in Austin, Texas from CONDITIONAL APPROVAL to FULL APPROVAL.

Entered this 27th day of October, 2016

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