

**Report of Application of a New Baccalaureate Degree Nursing Education Program  
in a Public Junior College  
South Texas College in McAllen, Texas**

**Background:**

- Senate Bill 2118 passed by the 85(R) Texas Legislative Session allowed the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) to authorize certain public junior colleges to offer baccalaureate degree programs, including nursing. The bill allows public junior colleges that meet the requirements in SB 2118 to seek approval from THECB and from the Texas Board of Nursing (BON) [Sec. 130.305(b)(2)].
- Staff from the BON and THECB have developed a collaborative process to handle applications from community colleges interested in establishing a baccalaureate degree nursing (BSN) education program.
- The first application/proposal received by both agencies was submitted by Austin Community College in Austin, Texas, was approved, and has begun operation. Further applications/proposals reviewed and approved were from Grayson College in Denison, Texas; Collin College in McKinney, Texas; and Laredo Community College in Laredo, Texas.

**Proposal from South Texas College in McAllen, Texas:**

- A proposal to launch a Registered Nurse (RN)-to-BSN Program at South Texas College (STC) in McAllen, Texas, was received in the Board office on February 19, 2019. It was reviewed by Janice I. Hooper, PhD, RN, FRE, CNE, FAAN, ANEF, and Virginia D. Ayars, EdD, MS, RN, CNE, and found to be in alignment with Rule 215.
- STC, established on September 1, 1993, by Texas Senate Bill 251, is accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges to award Baccalaureate and Associate Degrees. STC is approved by THECB and the Texas Education Agency. In 2003, during the 78<sup>th</sup> legislative session, the passage of Senate Bill 286 allowed four community colleges in Texas, including STC, to offer the Bachelor of Applied Technology (BAT) Degree. The program proved successful with STC graduating its first 15 BAT Program students in 2007.
- The NCLEX-RN® examination pass rate for the Associate Degree Nursing Education Program for the past three years has been between 81.53% and 86.58%.
- The proposal articulates the following reasons to offer the RN-to-BSN Program:
  - To further the progress toward increasing the proportion of nurses with baccalaureate degrees in Texas as recommended by the Institute of Medicine in its 2010 *Future of Nursing* report;
  - To provide an opportunity for RNs in Hidalgo and Starr counties to enroll in an RN-to-BSN program in a familiar educational setting;
  - To produce more baccalaureate degree nurses to meet the projected need for more baccalaureate degree nurses in the health care facilities in the Rio Grande Valley;
  - To address the Nurse Supply and Demand Projections for 2015 to 2030 that indicates the supply of nurses will fail to meet the demand; and

- To provide access to nurses in the US-Mexico border region to meet the needs of the Lower Rio Grande's 94% Hispanic population with specific health care challenges of lack of access to primary health care.
- The RN-to-BSN Program plans to enroll 30 students each fall semester beginning in Fall 2019 with both full-time (12-month track) and part-time (18-month track) options. All student policies required by Rule 215 for pre-licensure students will be available to the RN-to-BSN students.
- A total of 12 doctorally-prepared faculty members (including the Program Director) will be teaching in the RN-to-BSN Program. Nine of the faculty members will be shared faculty with the ADN Program and three will be shared faculty with the Vocational Nursing Program at STC.
- The program will be offered at the Dr. Ramiro Casso Nursing and Allied Health Campus in McAllen. The physical facilities have been expanded to provide ample space for the program.
- The proposed degree plan consists of 47 semester credit hours (SCH) of lower division courses accepted from the ADN Program, 42 SCH of core curriculum courses, and 31 SCH of upper division nursing courses.
- Upper division clinical learning experiences are designed to offer students opportunities in a variety of settings such as: adult day care, long term care, skilled care, acute care, hospice school nursing, Head Start programs, home health care, public clinics, local health departments, community facilities, prisons, homeless shelters, mental health clinics, group meetings, and simulation laboratories. Clinical contracts have been secured with 10 acute care facilities, one long-term care facility, and the Department of State Health Services. Faculty are responsible for instruction, assessment, and supervision of students.
- STC will begin the candidacy process with the Accreditation Commission for Education in Nursing (ACEN) after the program is approved by THECB. As the goal is to admit the first cohort of RN-to-BSN students by Fall 2019, the potential time line for ACEN activities includes a Self-Study Report to be prepared and submitted by Spring 2020.
- STC meets the requirements of Board Rule 215 and Board Staff recommended approval of the program to THECB.
- THECB approved the South Texas College RN-to-BSN Program application on March 29, 2019.

This report is for information only. No action is required.