

**Report on Application for a New Baccalaureate Degree Nursing Education Program  
in a Public Junior College  
Weatherford College in Weatherford, Texas**

**Background:**

- Senate Bill 2118 passed by the 85<sup>th</sup>(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. Public junior colleges that meet the requirements in SB 2118 and are found to be in compliance with Texas Board of Nursing (BON) education rules may seek approval from THECB [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 in Nursing (BSN) Education Program.
- Six applications/proposals have been received and processed by both agencies:
  - Austin Community College in Austin, Texas;
  - Grayson College in Denison, Texas;
  - Collin College in McKinney, Texas;
  - Laredo College in Laredo, Texas;
  - South Texas College in McAllen, Texas; and
  - Lone Star College in The Woodlands, Texas.

**Proposal from Weatherford College in Weatherford, Texas:**

- A proposal to establish a BSN Program at Weatherford College in Weatherford, Texas, was received in the Board office on October 4, 2018. It was reviewed by Ann Amaefule, MSN, RN, and Virginia D. Ayars, EdD, MS, RN, CNE, and found to be in compliance with Rule 215.
- Weatherford College is accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC). The Associate Degree Nursing (ADN) Program is accredited by the Accreditation Commission for Education in Nursing (ACEN) and the graduates' pass rates for the 2018 NCLEX-RN® examination was 95.20%.
- The RN-to-BSN Program will be part of the Weatherford College Health and Human Sciences Department. The curriculum will be developed, implemented, and evaluated by the nursing faculty under the direction of the proposed Director, Tola Plusnick, DNP, RN, CPNP-PC, who authored the proposal. Dr. Plusnick has been a Registered Nurse for 27 years and has worked in nursing higher education for 16 years, serving as a faculty member, and as the Assistant Director in Weatherford College's ADN Program.
- The proposal sets forth the following rationale for Weatherford College to create the RN-to-BSN Program:
  - to address the anticipated RN vacancies in the Weatherford area;
  - to facilitate articulation for Weatherford ADN graduates in pursuing a BSN;
  - to offer a BSN Program that provides online didactic courses except for two precepted clinical courses and an interactive assessment course; and
  - to provide a pathway to the BSN that is accessible and affordable.

- The enrollment plan for the RN-to-BSN Program is based upon an admission of 30 students in Fall 2020, then increasing enrollment to 40 students in the second year, 50 students in the third year, and thereafter.
- Weatherford College's Speaker Jim Wright Library is located at the heart of its campus, providing computer workstations, printing, and comfortable seating for students to study alone or in groups. The library provides online databases, in which students have access to many full-text journal articles. In addition to the online journal databases, the library has approximately 1,150 books which support nursing and allied health. Weatherford College also participates in TexShare, which allows access to electronic databases and content, reciprocal borrowing, and interlibrary loan for many libraries across the state of Texas.
- Program requirements for the 120 semester credit hours (SCH) curriculum includes 60 SCH of ADN courses, 31 SCH of BSN core general education courses, and 29 SCH of upper-division nursing courses. The RN-to-BSN Program is designed to be completed in three semesters of full-time study with the didactic totally online.
- The RN-to-BSN Program curriculum has a strong focus on using the nursing process in the delivery of patient-centered care. From the first course to the last course, the emphasis is on evidence-based practice. The nursing process provides a framework from which care is planned, implemented, and evaluated. The curriculum for the BSN level courses is designed to ensure students have the necessary knowledge, behaviors, and skills to practice upon completion of the program.
- The curriculum incorporates the *Differentiated Essential Competencies* (DECs), expanding the competencies beyond those of the ADN level to the BSN level. Course syllabi are thorough, comprehensive, and learning activities and objectives are consistent with the mission and program objectives for BSN level education. Grading criteria and rubrics are provided for courses in the program.
- Upper-division clinical learning will emphasize population-focused community health and leadership experiences. In NURS 4733 - Population Focused Community Health, students are to identify a community need and seek preceptors who can specifically assist with achieving the goals identified by the student. In NURS 3723 - Leadership Roles, students will work with a nurse leader in their community to create an evidence-based practice guideline to address a clinical problem identified by the student.
- Weatherford's role in assisting students with locating clinical preceptors/sites is as follows: the program will build a list of previously used preceptors and offer it to students when applicable to their geographic area. Identification of preceptors will depend primarily on the student's community and its specific needs.
- The Total Program Evaluation is based on the ACEN systematic evaluation plan template. Weatherford College plans to pursue candidacy for ACEN accreditation of the program.
- As the Weatherford College RN-to-BSN Program proposal meets the requirements of Board Rule 215, Board Staff recommended approval of the program to THECB.
- The Weatherford College proposal is currently under review by THECB for approval.

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