

**Consideration of Change in Approval Status
From Initial Approval to Full Approval
University of St. Thomas in Houston, Texas
Accelerated Baccalaureate Degree Nursing Education Program**

Summary of Request:

Consider the proposed change in approval status for the University of St. Thomas (UST) Accelerated Baccalaureate Degree Nursing (ABSN) Education Program in Houston, Texas, from Initial Approval to Full Approval based upon review of the 2021 NCLEX-RN® examination pass rate and compliance with Board Rule 215.

Historical Perspective:

- UST is an independent, Catholic comprehensive coeducational university founded by the Congregation of St. Basil (the Basilian fathers) in 1947.
- The university is regionally accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) and holds a Certificate of Authorization from the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) to grant degrees.
- UST is a designated Hispanic-Serving Institution and has an established record of success in attracting and educating Hispanic students. UST has obtained substantial Federal grants to expand academic programs to meet national and regional Hispanic and low-income student educational needs.
- The UST Traditional BSN Program was approved at the July 2011 Board meeting and enrolled the first cohort of students in May 2012, who graduated in May 2014. The Traditional BSN Program currently has the status of Full Approval.
- The Traditional BSN Program is accredited by the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (CCNE) through December 31, 2029.
- The ABSN Program was established via a formal request to the Board for approval of a Major Curriculum Change to the Traditional BSN Program. The request was approved by Board Staff on July 1, 2019. The ABSN Program also has programmatic accreditation by CCNE.
- The ABSN Program enrolled the first cohort of 20 students in pre-requisite courses in Summer 2020. The group advanced to the nursing curriculum in Fall 2020.
- ABSN students were required to achieve the same program outcomes as those in the Traditional BSN Program; however, with two minor exceptions. Firstly, the *Nursing Informatics* course would not be provided as a separate course in the ABSN curriculum. The course objectives and content would be fully integrated in clinical courses. Secondly, the *Transition to Holistic Nursing Practice*, the capstone clinical course, would be reduced by one semester credit hour. The clinical practicum would be unchanged.

- Claudine Dufrene, PhD, RN-BC, GNC-BC, CNE, served as the founding ABSN Program Director until July 1, 2021, at which time Dr. Dufrene assumed the position of Division Dean of Undergraduate Programs (BSN and ABSN Programs). Dr. Dufrene was a full-time faculty member in the BSN Program since 2013.
- Three admission cohorts are offered each year: August, January, and May.
- In August 2020, 24 new students were enrolled in the 12-month long ABSN Program. In January 2021, 76 new students were admitted and in May 2021, 47 new students were enrolled, for a total of 147 admissions during the academic year 2020-2021.
- The ABSN Program has two full-time faculty members and 54 part-time faculty members. The two full-time faculty members and 14 of the 54 part-time faculty members have a specialty in nursing education.
- The ABSN Program offers 94% of clinical learning experiences in acute care settings and 6% of clinical instruction in community settings. Clinical affiliates in the Houston area include: Ben Taub Hospital, Texas Children's Hospital, Memorial Hermann - The Medical Center, Methodist Woodlands, HCA Conroe, and HCA Tomball.
- A total of 13 ABSN Program students graduated in academic year 2020-2021 and 13 took the NCLEX-RN® during the 2021 examination year. Twelve of the 13 candidates were successful, yielding an NCLEX-RN® pass rate of 92.31%.

Rationale for Staff Recommendation:

The University of St. Thomas is a Catholic comprehensive university that is accredited by SACSCOC, a THECB-recognized accreditation organization. The ABSN Program is accredited by the CCNE. Based upon performance, consistent leadership in the program, well-accomplished nursing leaders and nursing faculty, and the provision of exemplary clinical learning experiences, Board Staff recommend full approval. The ABSN curriculum is basically the same as the curriculum used in the Traditional track and has a proven record of success for graduates.

Staff Recommendation:

Move to change the approval status for the University of St. Thomas Accelerated Baccalaureate Degree Nursing Education Program in Houston, Texas, from Initial Approval to Full Approval based upon review of the NCLEX-RN® examination pass rate for 2021 and program strengths that indicate compliance with Rule 215, as indicated in the attached letter and Board Order (See Attachment #1).

Draft Letter

April 21, 2022

Claudine Dufrene, PhD, RN-BC, GNC-BC, CNE
Director of Nursing
Accelerated Baccalaureate Degree Nursing Education Program
Carol and Odis Peavy School of Nursing
University of St. Thomas
3800 Montrose Blvd.
Houston, TX 77006-4626

Dear Dr. Dufrene:

At the hybrid April 21, 2022, meeting, the members of the Texas Board of Nursing (Board) discussed the approval status for the University of St. Thomas Accelerated Baccalaureate Degree Nursing Education Program in Houston, Texas, based upon review of the NCLEX-RN® examination pass rate for 2021 and program strengths indicating compliance with Rule 215.

Based upon the discussion and review of documents, it was the decision of the Board to change the approval status for the University of St. Thomas Accelerated Baccalaureate Degree Nursing Education Program in Houston, Texas, from Initial Approval to Full Approval as indicated in the attached Board Order. Congratulations upon this achievement. The program will be issued a certificate of approval following the April 2022 Board meeting.

If you have any questions or if we may be of assistance, please contact Board Staff at Virginia.Ayars@bon.texas.gov or via telephone at (512) 305-7660.

Sincerely,

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

Copy: Dr. Richard Ludwick, President
Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board
Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education
Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges

BEFORE THE TEXAS BOARD OF NURSING

ORDER OF THE BOARD

In the Matter of
University of St. Thomas
Accelerated Baccalaureate Degree Nursing Education Program
In Houston, Texas

A public meeting of the Texas Board of Nursing, hereinafter referred to as the Board, was held by hybrid format on April 21, 2022, 333 Guadalupe, Tower III, Room 100, Austin, Texas, to consider the approval status of the University of St. Thomas Accelerated Baccalaureate Degree Nursing Education Program in Houston, Texas, pursuant to Section 301.157, Texas Occupations Code and 22 Tex. Admin. Code Chapter 215, based upon review of the 2021 NCLEX-RN® examination pass rate, program strengths, and compliance with Rule 215.

After review and due consideration of the filed materials, as well as any response from representatives from the University of St. Thomas Accelerated Baccalaureate Degree Nursing Education Program in Houston, Texas, and other interested parties, if any, the Board hereby CHANGES the approval status of the University of St. Thomas Accelerated Baccalaureate Degree Nursing Education Program in Houston, Texas, from INITIAL APPROVAL to FULL APPROVAL.

Entered this 21st day of April, 2022

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