

**Proposal to Establish a New Nursing Education Program
ECPI University College of Nursing in San Antonio, Texas
Associate Degree Nursing Education Program**

Summary of Request:

Consider the ECPI University proposal to establish a new Associate Degree Nursing (ADN) Education Program in San Antonio, Texas. The final proposal was provided electronically to members of the Texas Board of Nursing (Board).

Historical Perspective:

- Founded in Norfolk, Virginia in 1966 by Alfred Dreyfus as the Electronic Computer Programming Institute (ECPI), the university has been innovative in being among the first educational entities to offer classes in computer programming. From that time, ECPI has pursued a path of sustained growth based on addressing the needs of students and employers that assisted in the mid-Atlantic's economic development.
- The university eventually expanded its program offerings to include engineering technology, health sciences, nursing, business, and criminal justice. ECPI also extended its presence by opening campuses in Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Florida, Texas, as well as via online programs.
- Degree programs at the associate, baccalaureate, and master's degree levels were added. Successful student outcomes, including high graduation rates and program-related employment, were the primary goals. The proposal sets forth that these values continue to serve the institution, its students, and graduates.
- The mission of ECPI is to provide a student-centered learning environment that promotes the enhancement of each student's professional and personal life through education.
- ECPI's main campus is located at 5555 Greenwich Road, Virginia Beach, Virginia 23462. The university has 14 campuses with an enrollment of 9,562 undergraduate and 238 graduate students and offers diploma, associate, bachelor's and master's degrees in nursing, technology, allied health, and business. The university has either a vocational, associate, baccalaureate or masters nursing education program or a combination of these programs at 12 of their campuses. The graduate level nursing program offers a Master of Science in Nursing for Family Nurse Practitioner.
- In 2013, the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) reviewed ECPI and reaffirmed accreditation. The next SACSCOC reaffirmation of accreditation review is scheduled for 2023. The university has accreditation by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board. Further, the Texas Workforce Commission has granted ECPI an exemption to operate in Texas.

- A first draft of the proposal was received in the Board office on July 26, 2021, and reviewed by Board Staff. Following Board Staff's recommendations, a revised version was received on November 15, 2021. The proposal was deemed complete for Board presentation on November 24, 2021.

Summary of Proposal:

Overview of the Proposal:

- ECPI proposes to establish a new pre-licensure nursing education program at the ADN level in San Antonio, Texas. The proposal requests enrollment of one cohort of 25 students during the first year, and following the first year 30 students will be enrolled in two cohorts per year.
- ECPI's nursing programs are located in Virginia, South Carolina, North Carolina, and Florida. These programs' pass rates are provided in the proposal and demonstrate that NCLEX pass rates at all levels of education at all programs range from 83.33% to 100%. All nursing programs are in good standing with their respective boards of nursing having either full or initial approval.
- The campus is located at 4715 Fredericksburg Road, San Antonio, Texas, and is housed in the Citizens Building on second and third floors of the five-story building. The second floor provides 8,967 useable square feet for the nursing department.
- The ADN Program is comprised of 71 semester credit hours (SCH). There are no prerequisites for the student to begin the program. A minimum of five semesters for a total of 75 weeks of instruction is needed to complete the program. There are three terms per semester for 15 terms in the program.
- ECPI has secured clinical affiliation agreements with Methodist Healthcare System, Medina Regional Hospital, Connally Memorial Medical Center, Legion Orthopedic and Spine Hospital, and San Antonio State Hospital. These opportunities will allow ADN students a wide variety of acute, post-acute, chronic, critical care, medical-surgical, and community health settings and services.

Rationale and Need for the Program:

- The proposal articulates that the rationale for establishment of the ECPI ADN Program include the nursing shortage, qualified nursing school applicants not being offered admission, and the inadequate number of nursing graduates. In addition, the proposal explains that the high prevalence of diabetes, poor health outcomes, the high number of residents living in poverty, and the high infant mortality rate support the need for the program. The proposal also states that the unknown long-term effects of COVID-19 may result in an increase of individuals with health issues that are yet to be identified. All these factors are substantially detrimental to the health of Bexar County residents.

Administration and Organization:

- A letter of support from the ECPI University Board of Trustees approved the establishment

of the ADN Program in San Antonio, Texas, and is included in the proposal.

- ECPI is committed to supporting the initial investment needed to successfully launch the ADN Program at the San Antonio campus. The university has the resources to fund the operating expenses during the startup phase of the program, utilizing cash flows from operations.
- The proposed ADN Program Director, Margaret Kriegel, PhD, MSN, RN, CNS, CCRC, has been a professional nurse since 1977, and a nurse educator for more than 30 years. Dr. Kriegel served as the Director of a Texas Graduate and Baccalaureate Degree Nursing Education Program from 2012 through 2019. She is a highly accomplished nurse educator.

Faculty:

- Faculty have been recruited and eight faculty applicants' qualifications and their potential teaching assignments are identified in the proposal. The proposal describes that expertise through education and experience are the foundations for faculty assignments as well as the ability to communicate and teach the required content. The curriculum vitae of current and potential faculty are provided in the proposal.
- One full-time faculty member, Francis Carvalho, MSN, RN, has been hired for the program. Ms. Carvalho has 33 years professional nursing experience and has served as a nurse educator for six years.
- All written policies for nursing faculty are provided electronically through Canvas on the Master RN Faculty Resources web page. In addition to the orientation materials provided, the two sources found on the Master RN Faculty Resources website are the [ECPI University Catalog](#) and the Faculty and Staff Manual. They each include the written policies and procedures to guide the faculty and program activities. Policies for adjunct (part-time) faculty are the same as for full-time faculty.
- The proposal sets forth that the purpose of the Faculty Organization is to provide a framework within which the educational and administrative goals of the ADN Program may be accomplished. Faculty (full-time) and adjuncts (part-time faculty) are voting members and have responsibility for teaching, curriculum development, and evaluation. Regular faculty meetings will be held. Minutes of faculty meetings document the reasons for actions and the decisions of the faculty and shall be available for reference. Each year, a meeting for all program faculty from all campuses will be held in a central location.
- Full-time faculty are scheduled to teach a maximum of 18 undergraduate Semester Credit Hours (SCHs) per semester. Adjunct or part-time faculty will teach a maximum of 15 undergraduate SCHs per semester. The Program Director and the individual faculty members determine the courses assigned and number of hours taught as well as other duties. Adjunct Faculty are employed for specific or limited duties.

Students:

- Initially, a cohort of 25 students will be enrolled. Following the first year, 30 students will be enrolled in each of two cohorts per year to total an enrollment of 60 new students per year. Historically, ECPI's attrition rate is 21% to 30%. Considering the expected attrition, the projected number of students for the first graduation will be approximately 20 students.
- Recruitment for students will be done through the internet and social media. When an individual contacts the school, an admissions advisor dedicated to nursing applicants discusses the admission process and requirements for completion of the program.
- Only students who meet the admission criteria are offered admission to the nursing program. The Academic Review Committee, comprised of three individuals, including Nursing Administration or faculty, will select the qualified applicants who rank highest on the admissions criteria. The Academic Review Committee will determine final selection for admission to the program.
- Applicants are required, as part of the admissions process, to undergo a Board criminal background check. Results must be obtained prior to acceptance into the nursing program. Students must present a "Blue Card" or an Operations Outcome Letter for admission to the program. Students are required to sign a document as validation of receipt of the eligibility information for licensure.

Program of Study:

- The ECPI ADN Program proposal states it is dedicated to providing education opportunities for qualified students from diverse backgrounds in caring for individuals, families, and communities and for preparing graduates for the entry-level practice of nursing in a variety of healthcare settings.
- Further, the proposal explains that the courses and course objectives were developed from the philosophy and mission statements. As seen in the syllabi, each course objective addressed one or more program outcomes. The program's courses and their objectives are structured to build competencies and skills for the student to meet all program outcomes upon completion of the program. This will produce a competent, caring nurse who successfully passes the NCLEX-RN.
- The ADN Program is comprised of 71 SCHs. A minimum of five semesters for a total of 75 weeks of instruction is needed to complete the program. There are three terms per semester for 15 terms in the program. No prerequisites for the student are required to begin the program.
- The 22 SCHs of arts and sciences and self-integration courses required for the ADN Program provides students with the skills to communicate effectively and develop an awareness in the areas of integrity, ethical reasoning, and cultural diversity. These courses are designed to assist the student to begin to think critically, apply abstract concepts, and draw conclusions from course concepts.

- Fourteen core nursing courses (46 SCHs) in the curriculum prepare the graduate to successfully complete the program and pass the NCLEX-RN. Ten of the courses include a clinical learning experience and are a single course. The four courses that do not have clinical learning experiences are foundational components of nursing practice.
- The proposal articulates that the Differentiated Essential Competencies of Graduates of Texas Nursing Programs (*DECs*)(2021) are evident throughout the curriculum and result in effective preparation of graduates to provide safe, competent, compassionate care. The four main nursing roles and their associated competencies are the expectations for the entry level into registered nursing practice of an ADN Program graduate. The 25 competencies for ADN Education Program graduates are met at the successful completion of the program.
- In alignment with Board Rule 215, five content areas are covered within the program of study: medical-surgical, maternal/child health, pediatrics, mental health, and geriatric nursing. Multiple instructional strategies are used in the program. They include lecture, case studies, concept mapping, interactive tutorials, computerized adaptive learning systems, problem based learning, online instruction as well as high, medium, and low fidelity simulations.
- Articulation agreements have been established with three schools offering an advanced degree: Texas Tech University Health Science Center, Grand Canyon University, and ECPI University.

Clinical Learning Experiences:

- The criteria and rationale for the selection of affiliate agencies or clinical practice settings for the proposed program are based upon the objectives of each clinical. Initially, sites that provide basic nursing skills are used to introduce the student to therapeutic communication and meeting the patient's hygiene and comfort needs. As the program progresses, clinical sites that provide experiences in the care of medically complex patients are selected.
- Clinical contracts have been secured with eight facilities, including: Connally Memorial Medical Center, Hill Country Memorial Hospital, Medina Regional Hospital, and Methodist Healthcare System. In addition, students will have the opportunity to rotate at Boerne Independent School District, Legion Orthopedic and Spine Hospital, and San Antonio State Hospital.
- The proposed program will not have an impact in the use of clinical resources for other nursing programs in the area. The schools currently using a particular clinical site keep that clinical site and rotation schedule. New programs are provided clinical experiences where available as indicated on the ServEdLink website.
- Clinical evaluation tools follow the clinical objectives for the courses and establish progressive expectations for student performance. On a daily basis, the faculty will identify and document in the evaluation tool the student's strengths and areas in need of

improvement. The evaluation will be discussed with the student at the end of each day. Ratings of less than “3” require comments. Student must attain a rating of at least “3” in all objectives by the end of the term to successfully pass clinical.

- The objectives for the student’s clinical experiences are based upon Bloom’s Taxonomy, a hierarchical ordering of cognitive skills that has 19 specific cognitive processes placed into six different categories. The six categories, from lower thinking skills to higher order thinking skills are: 1) remember, 2) understand, 3) apply, 4) analyze, 5) evaluate, and 6) create. The initial clinical experiences in the program incorporate objectives that represent lower order thinking skills. As the student progresses, the objectives increase in complexity toward higher order thinking skills.
- Faculty are responsible for the supervision of students during their clinical experiences. The Faculty Orientation website lists the expectations for faculty in the management of clinical learning experiences. It establishes that the faculty member is the only person officially responsible for their clinical group. A clinical group shall allow no more than 10 students per faculty member. In courses that use clinical preceptors for a portion of clinical learning experiences, faculty shall have no more than 12 students in a clinical group.

Facilities, Resources, and Services:

- The campus is located at 4715 Fredericksburg Road, San Antonio, Texas. ECPI is housed in the Citizens Building on second and third floors of the five-story building. The second floor provides 8967 useable square feet. There are 14 offices, five classrooms, a conference room as well as a staff lounge and restrooms. Of the five classrooms, three are dedicated nursing skills and simulation laboratories. A reception area and workroom is easily accessible to faculty and staff.
- The program administrative assistant will be on third floor near the director and faculty offices. There will be access to an adequate work area and the necessary equipment such as printer, computer, file cabinets and telephone. Space for records and files and equipment is adequate. All sensitive material is kept secure under double lock in the office of the Student Services Coordinator or in password-protected files on the program’s website. An Admissions Counselor has been designated to manage nursing program applicants to assure consistency in information provided and processes involved in enrollment.
- The Assessment Technologies Institute (ATI) Assessment of Content Mastery and Comprehensive Predictor Exams are used to assess student learning during the program. These assessments provide information for the faculty and give the student an understanding of areas needing further study. ATI provides additional resources for remediation and improvement prior to advancing in the program. A preview of the student’s ability to pass the NCLEX-RN is determined in the last term with the Comprehensive Predictor exams. As needed, resources are available to the student to improve their chance of success.

- The ATI Nurse Logic product is used in this course. It provides interactive tutorials presenting foundational ideas and concepts of nursing as a profession. Students complete modules that include a self-assessment inventory, a critical thinking pre-assessment, knowledge and clinical judgement, and teamwork and collaboration.

Records and Reports:

- ECPI has a policy for the retention of records. ECPI uses CampusNexus, a student management system, to store most student data as well as the Student Enrollment Portal. Extensive precautions to protect data include backup policies, virus scanning, intrusion detection, firewalls, virtual private networks, activity logs, building security, etc.

Total Program Evaluation Plan:

- The written plan for the Systematic Plan for Evaluation (SPE) follows the College of Nursing SPE. It meets the requirements of the Board and the Accreditation Commission for Education in Nursing. As the summative step in the evaluation process, the findings are reviewed and the outcome will be an action plan for addressing findings. The San Antonio ADN Program has no extension sites or campuses. Implementation of the SPE shall be documented in the minutes of Faculty Meetings.

Rationale for Recommendation:

Pros:

- Margaret Kriegel, PhD, MSN, RN, CNS, CCRC, the proposed ADN Program Director, meets all requirements of Board Rule 215.6 to assume the leadership position. Dr. Kriegel is an experienced and accomplished nurse educator.
- The administration has committed the resources to the implementation and maintenance of the new ADN Program.
- The proposed ADN curriculum has demonstrated success in four other states.

Cons:

- The curriculum, although adapted to meet the requirements of Texas Board Rules and Regulations, is untried.

Staff Recommendation:

Move to grant initial approval to ECPI University to establish a new Associate Degree Nursing Education Program in San Antonio, Texas, and impose the conditions/requirements in the attached letter and Board Order.

DRAFT LETTER

January 20, 2022

Margaret Kriegel, PhD, MSN, RN, CNS, CCRC
Director, Associate Degree Nursing Program
ECPI University
4715 Fredericksburg Road
San Antonio, Texas 78229

Dear Dr. Kriegel:

At the January 20, 2022 meeting, members of the Texas Board of Nursing discussed the ECPI University Proposal to Establish a New Associate Degree Nursing Education Program in San Antonio, Texas. The Board wishes to thank you and XXXXXXX for being present to answer questions. Based upon the discussion and review of documents, it was the decision of the Board to grant initial approval to ECPI University to establish a new Associate Degree Nursing Education Program in San Antonio, Texas, and impose the conditions and requirements in the attached Board Order.

We wish you success with the program. If you have questions, or if we may be of 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: Mark B. Dreyfus, ECPI University President
Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board
Accreditation Commission for Education in Nursing
Southern Association of Colleges and Schools

BEFORE THE TEXAS BOARD OF NURSING

ORDER OF THE BOARD

In the Matter of
ECPI University
Associate Degree Nursing Education Program
In San Antonio, Texas

A public meeting of the Texas Board of Nursing, hereinafter referred to as the Board, was held on January 20, 2022, 333 Guadalupe, Tower II, Room 225, Austin, Texas, to consider the ECPI University proposal to establish a new Associate Degree Nursing Education Program in San Antonio, Texas, based upon the review of the proposal, pursuant to Section 301.157, Texas Occupations Code and 22 Tex. Admin. Code Chapter 215.

After review and due consideration of the filed materials, as well as the presentation by the representatives from ECPI University in San Antonio, Texas, and other interested parties, if any, the Board hereby grants INITIAL APPROVAL of the ECPI University Associate Degree Nursing Education Program in San Antonio, Texas and imposes the following conditions and requirements:

1. The program shall not admit more than one (1) cohort of twenty-five (25) students in January 2022, with a continuing admission of thirty (30) students in two (2) admission cohorts per year.
2. Board Staff shall conduct a virtual survey visit when students are enrolled and classes are in session.

Entered this 20th day of January, 2022

Katherine A. Thomas, MN, RN, FAAN

Executive Director