

**Proposal to Establish a New Nursing Education Program
Fairfield University in Austin, Texas
Baccalaureate Degree Nursing Education Program**

Summary of Request:

Consider the Fairfield University Egan School of Nursing and Health Studies proposal to establish a new Baccalaureate Degree Nursing (BSN) Education Program in Austin, Texas, which they refer to as a Second-Degree Nursing Program. The final proposal was provided electronically to members of the Texas Board of Nursing (Board).

Background:

- Fairfield University is a private Catholic university in Fairfield, Connecticut, founded by the Jesuits in 1942. There are more than 5,000 undergraduate and graduate students in the university.
- Fairfield University is fully accredited by the New England Commission on Higher Education (NECHE) formerly the New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC).
- Fairfield University is seeking to expand their impact nationally and offer an accelerated second-degree BSN program in central Texas at their new Austin, Texas campus.
- Fairfield University is home to four undergraduate colleges, one of which is the Marion Peckham Egan School of Nursing and Health Sciences. The Egan School of Nursing and Health Sciences admitted its first students in the fall of 1970 into the four-year full-time undergraduate program.
- Egan was awarded initial accreditation from the National League for Nursing Accrediting Commission (NLNAC) in May 1974, the year the first cohort graduated. In 2017, Egan obtained accreditation from the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (CCNE) for a 10-year period. Egan has maintained continuous national nursing accreditation.
- The baccalaureate degree in nursing/master's degree in nursing/Doctor of Nursing Practice Programs at Fairfield University are accredited by the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (CCNE).
- Fairfield University has been granted an exemption by the Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) as a private college or university that awards recognized baccalaureate, or higher degree under Texas Education Code, Section 132.002(a)(6) (see page 555 of the proposal). The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) has authorized Fairfield University to grant bachelor's degrees, grant credits toward degrees, and to use certain protected academic terms in the state of Texas under a Provisional Certificate of Authorization at its Austin site (see provisions on Page 557 of the proposal).

Overview:

- The proposed second-degree BSN program is a full-time, 15-month program that has been in existence on the Connecticut campus for over 20 years. Fairfield refers to the program as a second-degree nursing program (SDNU) throughout the proposal.

- For each of the past three years, the NCLEX-RN pass rates have been approximately 95%.
- Fairfield proposes to admit 20 SDNU Program students to the Austin campus program in May 2023 as the first cohort with subsequent admission points in January and May of each year with a maximum of 50 students in each cohort.
- The Marion Peckham Egan School of Nursing and Health Studies inspires students to become leaders across social and healthcare environments. As a modern Jesuit institution, a central focus of care is to improve health outcomes with particular attention to the needs of underserved or vulnerable populations.
- The accelerated curriculum plan requires that all prerequisite and general education courses as well as support courses for nursing education are completed prior to entering the SDNU Program. Applicants can complete the required credits for transfer at any accredited university, but only courses in the nursing curriculum will be taught at the Fairfield Austin campus.

Rationale and Need for the Program:

- The rationale for the program was based on general knowledge of the increasing need for more nurses due to retirements and the demand for nurses, the number of applicants for nursing programs in Texas who are not admitted, and nurses leaving the profession due to burnout and stress.
- The Texas Center for Nursing Workforce Studies (TCNWS) data projects a labor deficit of 57,012 registered nurses for the state by 2032.
- An identified supporting factor for the new program would be an increase in hiring BSN-prepared nurses in the workplace.
- It is suggested that accelerated programs for nurses are in demand according to national data from the American Association of Colleges of Nursing. The consideration is that nurses with a prior degree in another discipline may bring other knowledge and skills beneficial to nursing.
- Fairfield University surveyed nursing programs in the area and determined that an accelerated nursing program for students with a prior bachelor's degree is indicated. They employed a firm to survey student interest in such a program but received mixed responses.

Administrative Support:

- A support letter from the President of Fairfield, Mark R. Nemeec, is included in the proposal. A projected budget supporting the program is presented.

Proposed Director:

- Lucina Kimpel, PhD, MSN, RN, developed the proposal and is named as the proposed director. She meets all Board requirements. The responsibilities for the director cited in the proposal include recruiting and sustaining student enrollment, overseeing construction and maintenance of the program, assisting in marketing, supervising faculty as necessary, and serving as an advisor/mentor to students. Dr. Kimpel, a professional nurse since 1980, has been serving as a nurse educator since 2003. She was Chair of a Nursing Education Program from 2006 to 2009 and Chair of a Graduate Nursing Program at Concordia University Texas in Austin during 2020 and 2021. Dr. Kimpel will have an administrative staff who will also be available to nursing faculty.

- Dr. Kimpel reports directly to Meredith Kazer, PhD, APRN-BC, FAAN, Dean, School of Nursing.

Faculty:

- Eight full-time faculty lines are budgeted with sufficient funds for necessary adjuncts. Faculty will be recruited through the Chronicle of Higher Education and postings with the Texas Nurses Association, the Texas League for Nursing, and the Texas Black Nurses Association websites. There are currently two identified qualified faculty besides the Director. All directors, faculty members, and adjuncts will be residents of Texas.
- Rooms on both the Connecticut and Texas campuses are being outfitted with conferencing technology to allow faculty members to participate in any meetings held on either campus. This plan will allow the Texas faculty to participate in professional development opportunities offered at the Fairfield campus in Connecticut and by Fairfield's Center for Academic Excellence.
- Faculty workload consists of teaching a total of 12 credits per semester. Additional professional staff positions that are planned include an Administrative Assistant, Clinical Placement Coordinator, Director of Simulation, and Simulation Educator. These staff members will be residents of Texas.
- The Nursing Faculty Handbook and a University Faculty Handbook are included as Appendix H. Common faculty handbooks will be used for the Texas campus as well as the home campus. The organizational structure and committees for the faculty are outlined and described in the handbooks. Dr. Kimpel will represent the Texas faculty on committees on the main campus. Board Staff recommended that a written policy for Texas faculty to have a voice in program decisions be established.

Students:

- The proposal summary states for the first cohort, the initial enrollment is 20 students in May 2023. The long-term goal is to establish and maintain a cohort of approximately 50 students each for two admission points, January and May of each year, by year five.
- The plan for recruiting students includes contacting graduates from other majors through information sessions, billboard and radio advertising, and social media posts. The Egan School's experience with this high caliper-type student has produced a very low attrition rate (<5%). Admission eligibility requires the completion of a bachelor's degree with a minimum of a 3.0 GPA. Dr. Kimpel indicated they have a pool of eligible candidates for the first cohort.
- The Nursing Student Handbook addresses eligibility requirements, immunization requirements for admission, and references Board rules for professional behavior. Appropriate policies are in place that indicate the program will comply with requirements set forth in Board Rule 215.8.

Program of Study:

- The Egan School of Nursing curriculum was updated with the approval of the AACN *Essentials (2021)*. The stated purpose of the curriculum is to *inspire students to become leaders across social and healthcare environments who improve health outcomes for all, inclusive of underserved or vulnerable populations*. Program outcomes follow *The Essentials (AACN, 2021)*.

Implementation of the Curriculum

- The curriculum plan has been successful through 20 years. The 15-month curriculum is delivered in a four-semester timespan with two entry points: mid-January and mid-May. Students entering the program in January proceed through a spring semester, summer semester, fall semester, and graduate the following Spring. May admissions follow a summer semester, fall semester, spring semester, and graduate in the following August. The scheduling allows flexibility for students who may pause their education and return later. Curriculum changes or proposals are presented to the Undergraduate Curriculum Committee for consideration by the members. A sample calendar is included depicting the schedule and times for didactic and clinical portions of the curriculum.

Curriculum Plan

- The 16 nursing courses totaling 60 credits are scheduled for four semesters with each semester including three to five courses; two courses include labs; and eight courses have clinical components. The student enters the program with 12 credits in prerequisites, 36 credits of general education that includes the following support courses:
 - Anatomy & Physiology I and II (with labs)
 - Microbiology (with lab)
 - Chemistry (with lab)
 - Developmental Psychology
 - Statistics

The curriculum outline follows:

SEMESTER I <i>NURS 1110 Intro. Prof. Nursing (3)</i> <i>NURS 1112 Healthcare Delivery (3)</i> <i>NURS 2270 Health Assessment (4)</i> <i>NURS 2272 Geriatric Nursing (4)</i> <i>NURS 3307 Fundamentals of Nsg (4)</i>	<i>Lecture (3)</i> <i>Lecture (3)</i> <i>Lecture (2) & Lab (2)</i> <i>Lecture (3) & Clinical (1)</i> <i>Lecture (2) & Lab (2)</i>
SEMESTER II <i>NURS 3301 Health and Wellness (3)</i> <i>NURS 2303 Basic Path & Pharm (3)</i> <i>NURS 3305 Mental Health Nsg (4)</i> <i>NURS 3312 Medical Surgical Nsg I (5)</i>	<i>Lecture (3)</i> <i>Lecture (3)</i> <i>Lecture (3) & Clinical (1)</i> <i>Lecture (3) & Clinical (2)</i>
SEMESTER III <i>NURS 3310 Foundations of Research (3)</i> <i>NURS 4323 Pediatric Nsg (4)</i> <i>NURS 4321 Prof. Nsg Leadership (3)</i> <i>NURS 4325 Medical Surgical Nsg II (5)</i>	<i>Lecture (3)</i> <i>Lecture (3) & Clinical (1)</i> <i>Lecture (3)</i> <i>Lecture (3) & Clinical (2)</i>
SEMESTER IV <i>NURS 3314 Maternal & Newborn (4)</i> <i>NURS 4330 Comm. Public, Global Health (4)</i> <i>NURS 4332 Transition to Professional Nsg (4)</i>	<i>Lecture (3) & Clinical (1)</i> <i>Lecture (3) & Clinical (1)</i> <i>Lecture (1) & Clinical (3)</i>

Total Credits= 60 16 Courses

Total Clinical Hours: 1 credit of clinical time = 42 hrs., 1 credit lab = 28 hours; thus, $(42 \times 12) + (4 \times 28) = 616$ Hours. (The number of simulation hours for each clinical course is given and none are excessive, allowing the majority of clinical time used in hands-on care.)

Total Classroom Hours: 1 credit = 15 hours; thus, 44 credits x 15 hours = **660 Hours**

- The Texas campus will include facilities for laboratories, classrooms, teaching-learning environments (including simulation equipment) that are equivalent to the home campus. To ensure adequacy in technology access, the university will provide loaner laptops to students as needed.
- The Program Director has reviewed the total curriculum and identified sections that present the concepts and competencies required in the DEC's. Mapping of the courses to the DEC's occurred in the summer of 2022. The DEC's competencies are found in the objectives in several courses as indicated in Appendix K (DEC's Map).
- The passing standard for all courses is 77%. Assessment Technologies Institute, LLC, (ATI) products are incorporated throughout the curriculum.
- Teaching strategies are designed to accommodate individual student learning styles using lectures, case studies, discussions, individual and collaborative student projects, presentations, simulations, and clinical applications. The proposal states there will be a pairing of seasoned course faculty from the Connecticut campus with Texas faculty to ensure the best use of the educational pedagogies. Courses will be formatted in face-to-face, hybrid, and online instruction modes depending on student and course needs, and availability of faculty.
- Students will be graded based on course papers, participation, reflections, group projects, and exams with multiple choice responses. Standardized exams will be used for approximately 10% of the grade. Clinical evaluations will be based on a Clinical and Simulation Assessment Tool (ClinSimCAT), the SDNU Four Semester Competency Matrix, written clinical assignments (clinical logs, care plans, concept maps, process recordings, and reflective papers). To assure clinical competency, the clinical instructor will complete a final competency-based evaluation for each student. A state-of-the-art simulation lab will allow high-quality simulation experiences for 50% of the clinical applications. Preceptors will only be used for the final (capstone) course.
- Abbreviated syllabi for all nursing courses are provided in Appendix J. Syllabi included in the proposal are the standard syllabi used in Connecticut to present the standard program of study. Board Staff recommended tailoring the syllabi for Texas students and the proposal author did so. Resultantly, objectives were added to the following courses: NURS 1110 Introduction to Professional Nursing; NURS 4321 Professional Nursing: Leadership and Management; and NURS 4332 Transition: Professional Nursing Practice.
- The establishment of signed clinical contracts for clinical practice in Texas is in process. The goal is to obtain a variety of clinical learning experiences in hospitals, small community agencies, nursing homes, major medical centers, public health departments, and primary care offices. Several letters of support have been received from these parties:
 - Department of Veterans Affairs
 - Baylor Scott & White
 - Governor Greg Abbott
 - Mark R. Nemecek, PhD, President, Fairfield University

- Appendix L provides three signed clinical contracts with:
 - AOMA School of Integrative Medicine
 - Baylor Scott & White
 - Temple VA Medical Center
 - *A contract was obtained with Ascension Seton after the proposal was distributed to Board members*
- Fairfield will work collaboratively with other nursing programs in the area. They have identified eight baccalaureate and one associate degree nursing programs that prepare RNs within a 30-mile radius of their planned campus. Fairfield plans to join the local professional organizations.

Facilities, Resources, and Services:

- The Fairfield University SDNU Program will occupy the third and fourth floors of a 24,000 square foot space at 7951 Shoal Creek Boulevard in North Austin. The Program Director will have a private office and there is a workforce suite that will house 10 faculty/staff members. Classrooms will be located on the third floor with the fourth floor reserved for simulation and skills labs. A locked storage area will provide security for vital records. Restrooms will be available on each floor.
- Students will have access to the Fairfield University DiMenna-Nyselius Library in Connecticut. The broad array of holdings includes a current nursing collection that supports the program, and a librarian will be prepared to meet the needs of the Texas campus. The library website offers links, tutorials, and 24/7 chats with a librarian. A Connecticut librarian will personally attend each orientation session for each new cohort of students at the Texas campus and will travel to Texas as necessary for student and faculty support.
- Student services include a Writing Center with trained tutors, Office of Academic Retention and Support and Disability Support Services, Career Center, Counseling and Psychological Support Services, and University Health Services. Students will have remote access to student services at the home campus.
- Computer-generated photographs illustrating the planned spaces for the Austin Fairfield University are included in Appendix M.

Records and Reports

- Security and security of records will follow policies of the university. The records retention schedule is provided in the proposal.

Total Program Evaluation:

- The Total Program Evaluation plan in Appendix N follows the format for CCNE. Initiatives will be undertaken to collect relevant data regarding the achievement of program outcomes, specifically for the Texas SDNU Program. These data points include program completion rates, employment rates, changes in application and enrollment numbers from year to year, and faculty evaluation outcomes. An additional method of obtaining student feedback will be through inviting student participation in roundtable discussions for undergraduate and graduate programs. These roundtable sessions have been held in Connecticut for the past five years to provide information for program improvement that is shared with the respective curriculum committees.

Pros:

- The Program Director is familiar with nursing education in Texas and has served as a faculty member for Texas-approved programs.
- Support services are available from the main campus.

Cons:

- The program reflects the DEC's concepts, but the program was not built on the DEC's.

Rationale for Recommendation:

Board Staff find the proposal meets the requirements for approval but recommend requiring monitoring for students in the first cohort. Though Fairfield University Egan School of Nursing and Health Sciences is an established and well-respected university in Fairfield, Connecticut, it will be a new entity in Texas functioning under a different set of regulations. Board Staff request that monitoring of the following areas while the first cohort is in place will allow an ongoing evaluation of the program's status and promote efforts for positive outcomes:

- Anticipated enrollment and retention of students
- The effectiveness of the curriculum at the Texas campus
- Adequate faculty and resources to accommodate the growing program
- Sufficient clinical placements to provide clinical experiences in a variety of settings with diverse patients

Staff Recommendation:

Move to grant initial approval to the Fairfield University Egan School of Nursing and Health Studies Second Degree Baccalaureate Degree Nursing Education Program in Austin, Texas, and impose the conditions and requirements in the attached letter and Board Order (Attachment #1).

DRAFT LETTER

January 23, 2023

Lucina Kimpel, PhD, MSN, RN
Program Director
Fairfield University Egan School of Nursing and Health Studies
7951 Shoal Creek Blvd.
Austin, Texas 78757

Dear Dr. Kimpel:

At the January 19, 2023, meeting, members of the Texas Board of Nursing discussed the Fairfield University Egan School of Nursing and Health Sciences Proposal to Establish a New Second-Degree Baccalaureate Degree Nursing Education Program in Austin, Texas. The Board wishes to thank you and Dr. Meredith Kazer, Dean, School of Nursing, 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 Fairfield University Egan School of Nursing and Health Studies to establish a new Second-Degree Baccalaureate Nursing Education Program in Austin, 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 Janice.hooper@bon.texas.gov or 512-305-6814.

Sincerely,

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

Copy: Meredith Kazer, PhD, APRN-BC, FAAN, Dean
Texas Workforce Commission
Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board
Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education

BEFORE THE TEXAS BOARD OF NURSING

ORDER OF THE BOARD

In the Matter of
Fairfield University Egan School of Nursing and Health Studies
Second-Degree 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 January 19, 2023, at the J. J. Pickle Research Campus, University of Texas, Austin, Texas, to consider the proposal from Fairfield University Egan School of Nursing and Health Studies to establish a new Second-Degree Baccalaureate Degree Nursing Education Program in Austin, 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 Fairfield University Egan School of Nursing and Health Studies, Austin, Texas, and other interested parties, if any, the Board hereby grants INITIAL APPROVAL of the Fairfield University Egan School of Nursing and Health Studies Second-Degree Baccalaureate Degree Nursing Education Program in Austin, Texas, and imposes the following conditions and requirements:

1. The program shall not admit more than 20 students in the initial admission cohort in May 2023. Beginning in January 2024, no more than two annual cohorts made up of no more than 50 students enrolled in each cohort will be admitted, until the program achieves the status of Full Approval.
2. Board Staff shall conduct a virtual survey visit when students are enrolled, and classes are in session.
3. The program shall submit for Board Staff approval no later than 10 days following the date of the end of each semester for the first cohort:
 - (1) a list of de-identified enrolled students;
 - (2) a progress report for each enrolled student;
 - (3) any attrition of students;
 - (4) data from student evaluations for each course;
 - (5) a list of nursing faculty with credentials; and
 - (6) a list of clinical facilities that have signed contracts to provide student clinical placements.

Entered this 19th day of January 2023

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