

**CONSIDERATION OF PROPOSED CHANGE IN APPROVAL STATUS
BASED ON 2006 ANNUAL REPORT AND VIRTUAL SURVEY VISIT
TEXAS A&M INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY CANSECO SCHOOL OF NURSING
FAMILY NURSE PRACTITIONER PROGRAM**

SUMMARY OF REQUEST:

Consider staff recommendation concerning a proposed change in the approval status for Texas A&M International University (TAMIU) Family Nurse Practitioner (FNP) Program based on review of the 2006 Annual Report and the report on the virtual survey visit.

HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE:

- TAMIU received Initial Approval for a new FNP Program at the July 2004 Board meeting.
- Twenty students were enrolled in Fall 2004 and ten students enrolled in Fall 2005.
- Fourteen students from the first cohort graduated in December 2006.
- A third cohort was not admitted in Fall 2006, but there are plans to admit twelve students in Fall 2007.
- Board staff conducted survey visits in September 2004, March 2005, and March 2006.
- During February and March 2007, Board staff conducted a virtual survey visit through telephone conference calls and email conversations with TAMIU administration, graduates and present students of the program, faculty, the program coordinator, and the Director of Nursing at TAMIU. Not all individuals responded to the inquiries.

SUMMARY OF EVIDENCE FROM VIRTUAL SURVEY VISIT:

Dr. Dan Jones, Provost and VP for Academic Affairs:

- The community values the FNP Program and views it as closing critical gaps in healthcare in the Laredo area.
- Though the HRSA grant is ending in Summer 2007, TAMIU is pursuing other sources for future funding.
- The administration is supportive of future plans for the FNP Program such as a post-Master's track.
- The addition of the FNP Program has provided the rationale for expanding the TAMIU School of Nursing into a College of Nursing and Health Sciences.
- One goal is that the FNP Program will attract highly qualified faculty to TAMIU who will conduct much-needed research in nursing practice and education.

Dr. Susan Walker, Director of Canseco School of Nursing, and Dr. Louise Autio, Coordinator of the FNP Program:

- Dr. Walker and Dr. Autio indicated that two students who previously withdrew from the program plan to return to the program.
- Additional financial support from the university for the nursing programs will be required in the future since the HRSA grant is ending.
- Physicians in the Laredo area are learning from each other about the role and value of the FNP.
- Graduates are involved in the local advanced practice organization.
- The program will seek national accreditation from either the National League for Nursing Accrediting Commission or the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education.
- They are considering admitting post-Master's students into the FNP track.
- A consultant from Northern Arizona University assisted them with revision of clinical evaluation tools and other program documents.

Dr. Louise Autio, Coordinator of FNP Program:

- Dr. Autio identified the following concerns related to the program: preceptor "burnout," lack of pediatric preceptors, space needs, shortage of computer labs on campus.
- Two BSN faculty who are FNPs are in doctoral programs. They serve as preceptors in the program.
- Dr. Autio plans to seek a practice area for herself in a homeless clinic.

Graduate from FNP Program:

- The FNP Program has provided adequate preparation for the FNP role through courses and clinical experiences.
- The graduate recognizes several options for FNP practice in her future.
- She identified strengths of the program in content related to critical thinking, research, community education on health promotion, and diversity.
- She plans to take the certification examination and seek authorization as an advanced practice nurse in Texas.

Current Students:

- The seven students remaining in the program participated in a conference call.
- Students made positive remarks about the classes and clinical experiences.
- Students are already getting job offers after they graduate.
- Students expressed a good understanding of the role of the FNP.

Dr. Whitney Bischoff, Adjunct Faculty:

- Dr. Bischoff has been teaching with the TAMU FNP Program since Fall 2006.
- She is experienced in teaching in an FNP Program.
- Dr. Bischoff is a Master's prepared RN with a doctorate in epidemiology.
- From the conversation, it was evident that she is an exceptional teacher with high standards.
- Dr. Bischoff indicated her needs for teaching resources are met. She teaches 60% of the course online but includes face-to-face interactions with students.
- She stated that the students have excellent library resources but they do not make full use of them.
- She stated that the program has clinically excellent faculty and the students have a heart for people in the community.
- Dr. Bischoff indicated the students' writing skills are weak and she is helping them improve their writing abilities.

Irma Lara, MSN, FNP, Faculty:

- Ms. Lara is very familiar with the Laredo community and available precepting experiences.
- Ms. Lara provides an excellent example to students of a local FNP in practice.
- Ms. Lara has a good relationship with students and graduates as they seek her for advisement and counseling.

PROS:

- Program Coordinator Louise Autio was mentored through August 2006 by Dr. Chris Boodley at the University of Texas Medical Branch in Galveston following a Board requirement.
- Program has met all previous recommendations and requirements.
- Funds have been available to support the program.
- The HRSA grant provided funds for a certification review course for December graduates.
- Many positive comments were received about the program from administration, faculty, students and graduates.
- Adequate classroom space is available for the program.

CONS:

- The Program has been actively advertising for an additional faculty member who is a doctorally-prepared FNP but has been unable to fill the position.
- Coordinator identified that the Program needs space and equipment to videotape procedures for the web-based portion of the courses, and a storage room for equipment.
- There is a shortage of computer labs on campus and a demand for other programs to use the nursing computer lab.
- The HRSA grant will end this year and future funding sources are uncertain at this time.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Move to change the approval status of the Texas A&M International Family Nurse Practitioner program from Initial to Full based on review of the 2006 Annual Report and the Virtual Survey Visit Report and issue the recommendations as stated in the attached letter (Attachment #1).

April 23, 2007

Louise A. Autio, PhD, FNP, BC, RN
Coordinator, Family Nurse Practitioner Program
Texas A&M International University
Canseco School of Nursing
5201 University Boulevard
Laredo, Texas 78041

Dear Dr. Autio:

At the April 19-20, 2007 meeting, the Board of Nurse Examiners discussed changing the approval status of the Family Nurse Practitioner Program at Texas A&M International University from Initial to Full Approval based upon the 2006 Annual Report and the Virtual Survey Visit Report. The Board wishes to thank you and Dr. Susan Walker for being present to answer questions. Based upon the discussion and review of documents, it was the pleasure of the Board to grant the program Full Approval Status and issue the following recommendations:

Recommendations:

1. The administration is encouraged to insure the FNP Program of continued financial support to sustain the program and to secure accreditation from a national nursing accreditation organization.
2. The administration is encouraged to provide adequate space for the program to produce videotapes of procedures to be used in the web-based portions of the courses. In addition, the administration is encouraged to provide adequate storage space for the program and to insure the FNP students priority in computer lab availability.
3. The program is encouraged to continue to aggressively seek to recruit additional qualified faculty for the program.

The Full Approval Status will be effective for the graduates of 2006 and 2007 as they seek authorization as advanced practice nurses in Texas.

Congratulations and best wishes to the FNP Program at Texas A&M International University. If we may be of assistance in the future, please contact board staff at (512) 305-6814 or email to janice.hooper@bne.state.tx.us.

Sincerely,

Linda R. Rounds, PhD, RN, FNP
President

Janice I. Hooper, PhD, RN
Nursing Consultant for Education

copy: Dr. Ray Keck, President, TAMIU
Dr. Dan Jones, Provost, TAMIU
Dr. Susan Walker, Director, Canseco Nursing School