

**Request to Conduct an Innovative Pilot Project
With Extension Sites in El Paso and Brownsville, Texas
Western Governors University in Houston, Texas
Baccalaureate Degree Nursing Educational Program**

Historical Perspective:

Western Governors University (WGU) Baccalaureate Degree Nursing Educational Program was approved at the July 2009 Board meeting. The program began operating in the Houston and Dallas areas and a total of fifteen (15) students are currently enrolled at these two locations. In February 2010, WGU informed board staff that they had conducted a needs assessment, seeking to expand the baccalaureate degree program into the El Paso, Texas area. Board policy requires that programs on initial approval not be approved to begin extension sites until they have graduated a class, have demonstrated compliance with Board rules, and have achieved a satisfactory NCLEX® examination pass rate.

The Board considered WGU's request to expand their program at the April 2010 meeting and recommended that WGU develop an Application for an Innovative Pilot Program to expand into El Paso and Brownsville. The BON authorized the Education Liaison Committee (ELC) to take action on the proposal. The WGU Proposal for Innovative Professional Nursing Education Pilot Program was received in the board office on May 7, 2010, and copies were forwarded to members of the ELC for consideration.

Members of ELC studied the proposal and agreed to approve the innovative project and to require that WGU supply the following additional information and clarification:

- Strategies to minimize risks for students who may experience negative effects,
- Projected enrollment numbers in relation to planned budget and expected graduates,
- Impact on clinical placements: Include surveys of other nursing programs using the facilities, and
- More objective (rather than subjective) outcome measures.

Outline of the Project:

The pilot program was considered based upon the following exception: Programs are typically required to hold full BON approval to establish extension sites. The WGU program is on initial approval and the success of the WGU model of prelicensure nursing education has not been determined. The plan for WGU to expand into two additional areas in Texas and the evaluation of the effectiveness of the program in El Paso and Brownsville will provide valuable data about the performance of the WGU model of prelicensure nursing education in Texas.

Preliminary Planning

- WGU conducted an online survey through three partner hospitals in the El Paso area late in 2009 with indications of strong interest from potential students.
- Both Sierra Medical Center and Sierra Providence East Medical Center have expressed willingness to support an initial cohort of ten (10) students each with the goal of improving their workforce of BSN prepared nurses and decreasing the RN vacancy rate.
- Clinical site availability has been established and schedules outlined.

Timeline

The pilot will be implemented during a two-year period beginning June 1, 2010 and ending May 31, 2012.

Research Objectives

- To determine the effectiveness of a clinical intensive coaching model to enhance students' competency in online didactic and clinical settings.
- To enhance collaboration between academic and practice environments to expand nursing capacity while promoting staff's professional development.
- To determine the effectiveness of the clinical intensive coaching model implementation to increase clinical capacity without negatively impacting existing student placements.

Measurable outcomes of the proposed pilot program

The proposed pilot program will use a descriptive design to collect quantitative and qualitative data on the effectiveness of the clinical intensive coaching model. Measurable outcomes will be determined through data collection in the following areas:

- Clinical outcomes
- Academic outcomes
- Student retention and success patterns
- Staff/partner reports
- Reports from other nursing educational programs

Additional Information Provided by WGU:

In response to questions and concerns from the ELC, WGU has provided additional information to the Board (Overview of responses to ELC in Attachment #1).

Recommendation:

Move to issue a formal approval letter to WGU for implementation of the innovative project with requirements for four (4) progress reports over the two-year period (See Attachment #2).



February 26, 2010

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To: Texas Board of Nursing Education Liaison Committee (ELC)
From: Jan Jones-Schenk and Veronica Abdur-Rahman
Subject: Additional information and clarification of pilot program
Date: June 22nd 2010

The information below will hopefully clarify the questions and concerns that were expressed by the Committee about WGUs Application for an Innovative Pilot Program. Each of the question/concerns has been separately addressed. We will be happy to provide further information if needed.

- 1. ELC recommended that we use more objective measures for clinical outcomes (rather than student satisfaction).** The section on measurable outcomes for the proposed pilot program (page 9 on the application) has been revised (see below) to more clearly illustrate evaluation measures we will obtain from coaches and clinical instructors along with student measures (responses on the student satisfaction survey). We included an additional measure of *percent of student who complete the clinical intensive* as an evaluation measure (see the attached revised evaluation plan). The clinical instructor's summative evaluation determines students' progression in the nursing program. This evaluation is completed with input from the clinical coaches. To clarify the clinical evaluation process at WGU, we have attached the framework used for clinical evaluation along with the clinical instructors' evaluation guide.
- 2. ELC recommended that the survey of other nursing programs about the impact on clinical placements be included in our evaluation plan.** This recommendation has been noted and is indicated on the table below under **staff/partners focused** outcomes and also reflected in the revised evaluation plan.

What are the measurable outcomes for the proposed pilot program?

Measurable outcomes for the proposed pilot will be determined for students and staff (clinical instructors and coaches) from partnering facilities and include the following:

Clinical focused measures from clinical instructors and coaches:

Formative evaluation as reflected on daily Coaches' Observation Forms will average scores of 3 or higher (on a 4 point scale) for each cohort.

Summative clinical evaluations for each cohort will average scores of 3 or higher (on a 4 point scale).

At least 90% of students in each cohort will successfully complete the clinical intensive within the specified timeframe.

Clinical focused measures from students:

Student cohorts will complete a student satisfaction survey at the conclusion of each clinical intensive. Expected survey outcomes are:

Each cohort will achieve a mean score of 3 or higher on the student satisfaction survey for overall experience with clinical intensives.

Each cohort will achieve a mean score of 3 or higher on the student satisfaction survey for enhanced self-confidence and inter professional interactions in the clinical setting.

Each cohort will achieve a mean score of 3 or higher on the student satisfaction survey in enhanced awareness of safety and organizational issues relevant to nursing and patient care.

All students will demonstrate competence using technology in the delivery of patient centered care.

Academic focused:

At least 60% of students will achieve satisfactory academic progress (SAP) by the 22nd week of the first term.

At least 85% of students in each cohort will score at Level 2 or higher on ATI performance examinations.

An NCLEX-RN pass rate of at least 85% will be achieved for each cohort.

Retention:

Retention rate of at least 70% will be achieved for each admitted cohort.

Staff /partners focused:

At least 90% of coaches and Clinical instructors will report moderate to high satisfaction with the clinical intensive coaching model.

At least 80% of coaches and clinical instructors will remain with the pilot program for the duration of the pilot program.

At least 80% of coaches and clinical instructors will report moderate to high satisfaction with educational enhancements (and opportunities) provided by WGU.

At least 80% of hospital partners will report clinical placement of WGU students had negligible impact on existing clinical placements from other nursing programs.

At least 80% of nursing programs sharing clinical placement with WGU will report negligible impact or change with their existing clinical placements.

6. ELC requested clarification about strategies to minimize risks to students related to negative effects (there was mention of policies but no details).

As noted by the ELC Committee, on p. 15 of the proposal application, it is indicated that policies are in place for students in the clinical setting who may require additional and extension of clinical intensive policy. We recognized that not all students will successfully complete the clinical intensive in the time required for specific clinical course. To address this issue, we have implemented a policy called *Extension of Clinical Intensive*. This policy provides for additional clinical hours for students who may need more time to demonstrate competency. Success is measured through evaluation by the Clinical Instructor in collaboration with the Clinical Coach.

Should a student require an "Extension of Clinical Intensive" the Clinical Instructor completes the required form, listing the key behaviors/competencies not met and a plan for developing the competencies during that intensive. An example with names redacted is attached to illustrate the comprehensive nature of evaluation during the clinical intensives. This strategy will help those students who may need additional time to achieve clinical outcomes and thereby minimize the risks of clinical failure.

7. The ELC Committee requested clarification about the relationship between enrollment numbers on page 20 of the proposal and the budget on page 22 of the project application. Please see attached budget and revised enrollment numbers.

DRAFT LETTER

July 26, 2010

Veronica Abdur-Rahman, PhD, RN, Director
Baccalaureate Degree Nursing Educational Program
Western Governors University
2606 Double Lake Drive
Missouri City, TX 77459

Dear Dr. Abdur-Rahman:

At the July 22-23, 2010 meeting of the Texas Board of Nursing (Board or BON), Board members discussed the Western Governors University (WGU) Proposal for an Innovative Pilot Program whereby WGU would expand its baccalaureate degree nursing program into El Paso and Brownsville. The Education Liaison Committee (ELC) had previously reviewed the proposal and took action to authorize WGU to proceed with the expansion. The Board wishes to thank you and Jan Jones-Schwenk for being present at the meeting to answer questions.

The Board submit this formal letter of approval to WGU for the project. WGU is required to provide the following reports to the Board during the two year period of the project:

1. WGU is required to provide four (4) six-month progress reports of relevant data/activities for that time period. The first progress report will be due in board office by December 31, 2010, with subsequent reports due by June 30, 2011, December 31, 2011, and June 30, 2012.
2. Progress reports shall address appropriate areas for the time periods based upon the following Research Objectives and Measurable Outcomes:

Research Objectives

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Information from the progress reports will be shared with the Board on a regular basis, and representatives from WGU are invited to present the findings from the innovative project to the Board at the July 2012 meeting. If you have questions or need further information, please contact board staff at (512) 305-6814 or janice.hooper@bon.state.tx.us. Best wishes as you proceed with the program.

Sincerely,

Linda R. Rounds, PhD, RN, FNP
President

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

copy: Jan Jones-Schwenk, RN, MNA, NE-BC