

**Proposal to Establish A New Nursing Education Program
University of St. Thomas in Houston, Texas
Baccalaureate Degree Nursing Education Program**

Summary of Request:

Consider the University of St. Thomas proposal to establish a new Baccalaureate Degree Nursing Education Program in Houston, Texas and the report of the survey visit (See Attachment #1). The final revised proposal was made available online to members of the Board. A notice of public hearing has been posted (See Attachment #3).

Historical Perspective:

- The University of St. Thomas (UST) is an independent, Catholic comprehensive coeducational university founded by the Congregation of St. Basil (the Basilian fathers) in 1947. UST, serving a student body of 3,520 is accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools. Four schools (Arts and Sciences, Education, Business, and Theology) offer 31 undergraduate programs, eight master's programs, and one doctoral program. Upon approval by the Texas Board of Nursing (Board or BON), the University will designate the School of Nursing (SON) as its fifth school.
- The proposed SON will build on the legacy of the Catholic nursing education programs that preceded it. The first training school for nurses in Houston was established by the Sisters of Charity of the Incarnate Word in Houston under the administration of St. Joseph Hospital (1905-1948). It was transitioned to Sacred Heart Dominican College (1948-1972) where it became the first Baccalaureate Degree Nursing (BSN) education program in Houston. Then in 1972, the school moved to UST. The BSN curriculum was offered there until 1986, when financial hardship caused by the severe economic downturn in Houston forced UST to close the nursing program. More than 2100 nurses graduated from these programs between 1905 and 1986 (423 from UST).
- UST nursing alumni have been actively involved in the development of the proposed new nursing program. Further, the group has provided initial funding of \$1 million for the Sister Mary Martina Casey Endowed Chair in Nursing and has pledged to complete a \$2 million endowment to assist the University with the financial resources needed for nursing faculty.
- 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.
- A site visit was conducted on June 15, 2011 by Virginia D. Ayars, MS, RN.

Summary of Proposal:

Overview of the Proposal:

- UST proposes to establish a new BSN Education Program in Houston, Texas.
- The University anticipates enrolling students in sophomore level pre-nursing courses in Fall 2011 and begin courses in the clinical major in Summer 2012. The student cohorts for the first two years of the program will consist of 40 students in each cohort with one cohort admitted each year.
- The projected graduation date for the first cohort is May 2014.
- The proposed 128 credit hour curriculum for the BSN education program consists of 68 hours in general education and 60 hours in nursing. The program will be provided during four academic years, plus two summer sessions.

- UST has secured a US Department of Education Title V grant for \$3.2 million (distributed over 5 years from 2010-2015) to assist with nursing program development. Some of this funding is being used to develop a Nursing Skills Lab that will include advanced simulation. The university has purchased a modular building with university funds to house the lab and the facility will be fully operational before students enroll in nursing coursework. St. Joseph Medical Center (SJMC) will provide two nursing classrooms with a seating capacity of 20 each for nursing classes and students will have access to the computer classroom at SJMC. Further, SJMC has agreed to provide additional space for the UST Nursing Simulation Center as needed. SJMC is located in downtown Houston two miles from the UST campus. The Methodist Hospital has offered to provide access to UST students to its Nursing Simulation Center.
- Clinical learning experiences will be conducted at the Texas Medical Center (TMC). UST has established a close partnership with Harris County Hospital District (HCHD) which operates three hospitals, including Ben Taub Hospital located in the TMC, a Level One Trauma Center, more than a dozen Community Health Centers, eight clinics based in public schools, 13 clinics for the homeless, and four mobile health clinics. All three hospitals in the HCHD system are designated *Pathway to Excellence* Hospitals. The affiliation with HCHD provides UST nursing students with access to the entire continuum of care.

Rationale and Need for the Program:

- Data presented in the proposal indicate a need for this professional nursing education program in the Houston area.
- A survey of clinical facilities indicated available clinical space will accommodate and support UST nursing students.
- Letters of support from community leaders in the Houston area indicate support for the proposed nursing program.

Administration and Organization:

- UST is accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools. The University programs are fully accredited, with the last accreditation visit held in March 2005.
- UST is exempt from Texas Workforce Commission or Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board approval, as it is a faith-based, private university.
- UST is governed by a 38-member Board of Directors that meets quarterly. The Strategic Planning Committee of the Board, composed of 11 board members and two vice presidents, meets at least three times a year.
- The UST Nursing Advisory Council was established in November 2008. The UST Nursing Advisory Council consists of 56 representatives of the health care industry, including nurses, physicians, hospital administrators, philanthropists, and former students. The members have provided fundraising, marketing, and professional networking support.
- The proposed dean, Poldi Tschirch, PhD, RN, BC, is fully qualified. Dr. Tschirch has served as the Baccalaureate Program Director of the University of Texas Medical Branch (UTMB) School of Nursing, Director of Nursing Informatics of the UTMB Telehealth Center, and Director of Distance Education for UTMB. Dr. Tschirch has 36 years of nursing experience and more than 20 years in nursing education as a faculty member and administrator.

Availability of Faculty and Clinical Sites:

- Two prospective faculty members who are experienced nurse educators have been actively engaged in curriculum development with Dr. Tschirch since March 2010: (1) Phyllis J. Waters, PhD, RN, and (2) Anne Meng, MN, CPNP, RNC, AE-C. Seven additional qualified faculty candidates have expressed interest in faculty positions and submitted their curricula vitae to UST.

- The Nursing Faculty Handbook provides new faculty orientation/mentoring plans and checklists.
- The Nursing Faculty Handbook describes faculty organization and functions.
- The program has received commitments for clinical affiliations from multiple health care institutions in Houston, most notably - Harris County Hospital District that includes Ben Taub Hospital and Lyndon B. Johnson General Hospital, the Menninger Clinic psychiatric hospital, and Christus St. Catherine Hospital in Katy, Texas.
- UST SON will join the Houston/Galveston Clinical Coordination Consortium following Texas BON approval.

Financial Support and Resources:

- The University has a well-developed fundraising plan for the SON that was approved by the UST Board of Directors and is being overseen by UST President Dr. Robert Ivany and the Vice-President for Institutional Advancement. Significant monies (funds greater than 10 million dollars) have been pledged, as well as received for the support of the nursing program. Financial statements were provided in the proposal to validate the financial stability of the institution.
- The survey visit indicated that the requirements of Board Rule 215 regarding facilities, resources, and services are completely addressed, or detailed plans are identified, in all categories.

Program of Study:

- The first two years of the BSN program emphasize general education, incorporating the UST core curriculum and specific pre-nursing courses. The University core curriculum consists of courses in the arts, humanities, life and social sciences, theology and philosophy designed to provide a foundation for the study of nursing arts and sciences. The sequence of courses in the nursing major is comprised of courses that emphasize nursing knowledge, its application in practice and the formation of professional nursing values essential for entry into practice.
- Significant clinical practice hours are planned throughout the program of study to promote the proficiency in skills necessary for competent nursing practice.
- The curriculum progresses from simple to complex in both breadth and depth. UST's curriculum, general education requirements, nursing courses, and program outcomes are consistent with the standards described in the American Association of Colleges of Nursing's *The Essentials of Baccalaureate Education for Professional Nursing Practice* (2010) and the *Institute of Medicine Core Competencies* (2005). The program objectives and outcomes, derived from the philosophy and mission, reflect the Texas BON *Differentiated Essential Competencies of Graduates of Texas Nursing Programs* (2010).
- The clinical evaluation instruments are well-written and provide opportunities for students to receive timely, formative comments designed to facilitate performance improvement to ensure student success in meeting expectations.

Total Evaluation Plan:

- The program's total evaluation plan is well developed and provides measurable indicators of achievement.

Comments from Survey Visit:

Staff met with administration and with the proposed dean of the program, as well as chief nursing officers from the clinical partners. The UST campus is located in downtown Houston in the heart of the Museum District and is approximately two miles from the TMC.

Pros:

- The administration has committed the resources to ensure successful implementation of this new program of study.

- The University campus has extensive resources.
- Comprehensive and diverse clinical learning experiences have been secured.
- The proposed dean is qualified and experienced in prelicensure professional nursing education.

Cons:

- None identified.

Staff Recommendation:

Move to grant initial approval to the University of St. Thomas School of Nursing to establish a new Baccalaureate Degree Nursing Education Program in Houston, Texas, with an initial cohort of 40 students to begin in Summer 2012 with a yearly admission of 40 students in each cohort based upon the proposal and survey visit as indicated in the attached letter (Attachment #2).

TEXAS BOARD OF NURSING

SURVEY VISIT PROGRAM REPORT
Professional Nursing Educational Programs

NAME OF NURSING PROGRAM: University of St. Thomas School of Nursing, Houston, Texas

DEAN OR DIRECTOR: Poldi Tschirch, PhD, RN, BC Proposed Dean

REASON FOR SURVEY: New Proposal DATE: June 15, 2011

SURVEY VISITOR(S): Virginia D. Ayars, MS, RN

VOLUNTARY ACCREDITATION: N/A

In this report the nursing program met standards and criteria unless otherwise indicated by narrative. Narrative in the Evidence column documents findings of pertinent data, outstanding performance, or deficiencies. Narrative in the Comments column includes recommendations or requirements to be met based on analysis of the survey visit

§215.11 Facilities, Resources, and Services	Evidence	Comments
<p>(a) The controlling agency/governing institution shall be responsible for providing: (1) educational facilities, (2) resources, and (3) services which support the effective development and implementation of the nursing educational program.</p>	<p>The University of St. Thomas (UST), located in downtown Houston, is considered a prominent landmark in the city's Museum District and is approximately two miles from the Texas Medical Center. The campus has sufficient classroom and academic support space for the general education and basic science courses in the program. St. Joseph Medical Center (SJMC), located in downtown Houston two miles from the UST campus, will provide classrooms, nursing labs space as needed, and ancillary support space.</p> <p>UST administration have strongly supported the development of the new program.</p> <p>The University is in a central and accessible Houston location. There is ample parking and bus services are accessible.</p>	<p>Criterion met.</p>

<p>(b) An appropriately equipped skills laboratory shall be provided to accommodate maximum number of students allowed for the program.</p> <p>(1) the laboratory shall be equipped with hot and cold running water.</p> <p>(2) The laboratory shall have adequate storage for equipment.</p>	<p>Architectural plans to build a state-of-the-art skills laboratory are in place. Land owned by the University on the corner of Yoakum and West Main will be the site for the new Center for Science and Health Professions building. Until completion of the building, UST SON students will utilize skills laboratory resources in a modular building developed as a Nursing Lab on campus and as needed at SJMC in the George W. Strake building at SJMC, two miles from the UST campus. In addition, Methodist Hospital will provide access to its Nursing Simulation Center to UST SON students.</p>	<p>Criterion met.</p>
<p>(c) The dean/director and faculty shall have adequate secretarial and clerical assistance to meet the needs of the program.</p>	<p>There is one full time administrative assistant for the nursing program.</p>	<p>Criterion met.</p>
<p>(d) The physical facilities shall be adequate to meet the needs of the program in relation to the size of the faculty and the student body.</p> <p>(1) The dean/director shall have a private office.</p> <p>(2) Faculty offices shall be conveniently located and adequate in number and size to provide faculty with privacy for conferences with students and uninterrupted work.</p> <p>(3) Space for clerical staff, records, files, and equipment shall be adequate.</p> <p>(4) There shall be mechanisms which provide for the security of sensitive materials, such as examinations and health records.</p> <p>(5) Classrooms, laboratories, and conference rooms shall be conducive to learning and adequate in number, size, and type for the number of students and the educational purposes for which the rooms are used.</p> <p>(6) Teaching aids shall be provided to meet the objectives/outcomes of the program.</p> <p>(7) Adequate restrooms and lounges shall be provided convenient to the classroom.</p>	<p>The dean of the nursing program has a private office. There are multiple conference rooms available in the building where faculty may meet with students.</p> <p>Faculty offices are currently located in the Office of Nursing Program Development. Additional faculty offices will be housed in the Nursing Success Center.</p> <p>Classrooms, computer laboratories, and conference rooms are spacious, sophisticated, and state-of-the-art.</p> <p>Comfortable and well-equipped student and faculty lounges are available.</p>	<p>Criterion met.</p>

<p>(e) The learning resources, library, and departmental holdings shall be current, use contemporary technology appropriate for the level of the curriculum, and be sufficient for the size of the student body and the needs of the faculty.</p> <p>(1) Provisions shall be made for accessibility, availability, and timely delivery of information resources.</p> <p>(2) Facilities and policies shall promote effective use, i.e. environment, accessibility, and hours of operation.</p>	<p>Upon completion, UST SON's Nursing Success Center will be a resource center designed to assist students by providing the services of peer and professional tutors.</p> <p>UST has several computer laboratories for student use. Each classroom has computer equipment with a projector, screen, CD/DVD player, and internet access for audiovisual presentations. The students have access to video instruction.</p> <p>The UST librarian has been actively involved in the planning phase to obtain appropriate library resources to support the SON. There are plans to acquire multiple online databases, including CINAHL Plus, Proquest Nursing & Allied Health Source, and the Cochrane Library. Currently, the UST Doherty Library offers the Ebsco Host database. Further, the Texas Medical Center Library will be available to UST nursing students.</p>	<p>Criterion met.</p>
<p>§215.12 Records and Reports</p>		
<p>(a) Accurate and current records shall be maintained for a minimum of two years in a confidential manner and be accessible to appropriate parties, including Board representatives. These records shall include, but are not limited to:</p> <p>(1) records of current students;</p> <p>(2) faculty records;</p> <p>(3) administrative records, which include minutes of faculty meetings for the past three years, and school catalogs;</p> <p>(4) the current program of study and curriculum including mission and goals (philosophy and outcomes), and course outlines;</p> <p>(5) agreements with affiliating agencies; and</p> <p>(6) the master plan of evaluation with most recent data collection.</p>	<p>UST SON plans to keep academic records indefinitely, while financial aid and student account records will be maintained for a minimum of seven years. Retention decisions were based on existing UST requirements, accreditation needs, and the State of Texas Record Retention Schedule guidelines.</p> <p>Further, records and reports will be maintained and stored in accordance with the Texas BON rules and regulations.</p>	<p>Criterion met.</p>
<p>(b) Record forms may be developed by an individual school.</p>		<p>Criterion met.</p>
<p>(c) Hospital employment forms are not to be used for student records.</p>		<p>Criterion met.</p>
<p>(d) Records shall be safely stored to prevent loss, destruction, or unauthorized use.</p>		<p>Criterion met</p>

DRAFT LETTER

July 21, 2011

Poldi Tschirch, PhD, RN, BC
Dean, School of Nursing
University of St. Thomas
3800 Montrose
Houston, TX 77006-4626

Dear Dr. Tschirch:

At the July 21, 2011 meeting, members of the Texas Board of Nursing (BON or Board) discussed the University of St. Thomas Proposal to Establish a New Baccalaureate Degree Nursing Education Program in Houston, Texas, and the report of the June 15, 2011, survey visit. The members of the Board wish to thank you and Dr. Robert Ivany, President of the University of St. Thomas, for being present to answer questions.

As indicated by the enclosed order, it was the Board's decision to grant Initial Approval status to the University of St. Thomas School of Nursing in Houston, Texas, and allow the admission of a first cohort of 40 students in August 2011, followed by the admission of one subsequent cohort of 40 students the following year.

We wish you success with the program. If you have questions, or if we may be of assistance, please contact Board staff at (512) 305-7660.

Sincerely,

Kristin K. Benton, MSN, RN
President of the Board

Virginia D. Ayars, MS, RN
Nursing Consultant for Education

copy: Southern Association of Colleges and Schools

Texas Board of Nursing
333 Guadalupe Street, Suite 3-460
Austin, Texas 78701-3942

BEFORE THE BOARD OF NURSING
IN AND FOR THE STATE OF TEXAS

In the matter of the proposal of the University of St. Thomas, Houston, Texas

For approval to implement a Baccalaureate Degree Nursing Education Program

ORDER OF THE BOARD

TO:

The Board of Nursing in and for the State of Texas in a regularly scheduled meeting, held on the 21st day of July 2011, considered the proposal for authority to implement a Baccalaureate Degree Nursing Education Program and obtain Approval from the Board, pursuant to Section 301.157, Texas Occupations Code.

At the meeting, Kristin K. Benton, MSN, RN, President of the Board, presided and the following members were present:

Deborah Hughes Bell, CLU, ChFC, Consumer Member
Patricia Clapp, BA, Consumer Member
Tamara Cowen, MN, RN, Representing Practice
Sheri Denise Crosby, JD, SPHR, Consumer Member
Marilyn J. Davis, RN, BSN, MPA, Representing Practice
Richard Robert Gibbs, LVN, Representing Practice
Kathy Leader-Horn, LVN, Representing Practice
Josefina Lujan, PhD, RN, Representing BSN Programs
Mary LeBeck, MSN, RN, Representing ADN Programs
Beverly Jean Nutall, LVN, Representing Practice
Mary Jane Salgado, MEd, Consumer Member
Verna Kathleen Shipp, APN, RN, Representing Advanced Nursing Practice

The Board reviewed the proposal of the above school and after having discussed the proposal in an open public meeting, the Board makes the following findings:

FINDINGS

1. That a written proposal has been filed with said Board.
2. That a public meeting on said proposal was held to take testimony and evidence by the Board.
3. That the written proposal does meet the minimum requirements for proceeding with the development of an approved program offering a Baccalaureate Degree.

ORDER

NOW THEREFORE, IT IS ORDERED THAT, the proposal of the University of St. Thomas is approved having been found to comply with minimum requirements for establishing a Baccalaureate Degree Nursing Education Program to prepare professional nurses.

DATED THIS 21st day of July, 2011.

THE BOARD OF NURSING IN AND
FOR THE STATE OF TEXAS

Seal

By: _____
Kristin K. Benton, MSN, RN
President

BOARD OF NURSING FOR THE STATE OF TEXAS

333 Guadalupe Street, Suite 3-460

Austin, Texas 78701-3942

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

for

Consideration of a Proposal from the University of St. Thomas

To Establish A

Baccalaureate Degree Nursing Education Program

in Houston, Texas

Date and Time: July, 21, 2011 at 2:00 PM

Place: Hobby Building

333 Guadalupe Street

Tower 2, Room 225

Austin, Texas

The Board will hear testimony from individuals who wish to present information concerning the proposal.

Written testimony will also be considered and should be received in the Board's office by July 14, 2011.

Address written testimony to:

Katherine Thomas, MN, RN, Executive Director

Texas Board of Nursing

333 Guadalupe Street, Suite 3-460

Austin, Texas 78701-3942