

**Consideration of Approval for Replication of An Innovative Pilot Project  
Tarleton State University Baccalaureate Degree Nursing Program in Stephenville, Texas  
In Collaboration with  
Weatherford College Associate Degree Nursing Education Program in Weatherford, Texas**

**Summary of Request:**

Consider the Application for Innovative Professional Nursing Education Pilot Program from Tarleton State University Baccalaureate Degree Nursing Program that represents a replication of a previously conducted innovative project.

**Historical Perspective of Rule 227:**

- At the April 2005 Board meeting, Rule 227, Pilot Programs for Innovative Applications to Professional Nursing Education, was adopted to allow professional programs to develop proposals for innovative education delivery models that required a waiver to Rule 215.
- The Board also approved the Request for Proposals (RFPs) for Board of Nursing Innovative Professional Nursing Education Pilot Programs consistent with Rule 227.
- The opportunity for programs to seek approval for innovative applications from the Board allowed programs to receive waivers from rule requirements that would be necessary to implement the innovative models.
- At the April 2005 meeting, the first proposal for a pilot program was submitted for Board approval from Midwestern State University in collaboration with Vernon College and the United Regional Healthcare System. The pilot project was approved and was successfully implemented.
- Since 2005, three (3) additional innovative pilot projects have been approved by the Board and are in varying stages of implementation and evaluation:
  - Victoria College Associate Degree Nursing Program in Victoria: "Preparing Certified Clinical Instructors".
  - Western Governors University: Program Expansion While on Initial Approval Status. The evaluation will be presented at the January 2013 Board meeting.
  - Coastal Bend College Associate Degree Nursing Program in Beeville, Texas: "The Use of BSN-Prepared Nurses Engaged in Graduate Studies to Serve as Certified Clinical Instructors". A report to the Board is scheduled for January 2013.

**Summary of the Midwestern State University (MSU) Pilot Project:**

- The Midwestern State University THECB-funded pilot project was designed to use faculty efficiently through the development of a regional interdisciplinary simulation center shared by a health care system, an associate degree nursing program, and a baccalaureate degree nursing program.
- The project [referred to as the North Central Texas Health Care Consortium (NCTHCC) model] was based upon using BSN-prepared lab mentors with strong clinical expertise to teach in the simulation center and to validate clinical skills for nursing students from the two programs and the health care system.
- This approach reduced the amount of faculty time spent in competency evaluation and validation, allowing more students to be admitted without increasing the number of faculty required.
- The final report and evaluation indicated that the program increased enrollment and graduation rates without increasing the number of faculty. No negative effects were seen on NCLEX examination scores.
- The program recommended replication of this pilot project in other educational settings in order to provide additional data on its effectiveness.

**Summary of Tarleton State University Plan for Replication of the MSU Pilot Project:**

- The Baccalaureate Degree Nursing Education Program at Tarleton State University School of Nursing in Stephenville, Texas has been in operation since 1995.
- Tarleton State University Baccalaureate Nursing Program received a two (2) year grant (*Using BSN RN Lab Mentors for Increasing Enrollment and Integrating Simulation Across the Curriculum: Metrics of Success.*) from THECB to replicate the North Central Texas Health Care Consortium (NCTHCC) model of using clinically competent baccalaureate prepared (BSN) lab mentors to implement scenario-based high and moderate fidelity simulation for competency education and validation of BSN and associate degree (ADN) students in simulation labs at Tarleton State University and Weatherford College.

- The Nursing Innovation Best Practices grant has been funded for a two year period of time: 9/1/2012-8/31/2014.
- Tarleton State University received initial accreditation by the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (CCNE) in 1997. Current CCNE accreditation is active through June 30, 2014.
- Board Staff evaluated the proposal, application form, and proposal form, including the Request for Exceptions (See Attachment #1).
- The five year NCLEX-RN pass rate for Tarleton State University is:

Year	BON Approval Status	NCLEX-RN® Pass Rate	Number of First Time Candidates (Passed/Total)
2011	Full	82.93%	34/41
2010	Full	82.35%	42/51
2009	Full	86.21%	50/58
2008	Full	89.29%	50/56
2007	Full	72.73%	32/44

- Weatherford College is a partner with Tarleton State University Baccalaureate Nursing Program in the funded grant project, *Using BSN RN Lab Mentors for Increasing Enrollment and Integrating Simulation Across the Curriculum: Metrics of Success*. A letter of agreement confirms the partnership. (See Attachment #2).
- Weatherford College received initial accreditation by the National League for Nursing Accrediting Commission (NLNAC) in October 2002. Current NLNAC accreditation is active through Fall 2012.
- The five year NCLEX-RN pass rate for Weatherford College is:

Year	BON Approval Status	NCLEX-RN® Pass Rate	Number of First Time Candidates (Passed/Total)
2011	Full	97.26%	71/73
2010	Full	94.12%	48/51
2009	Full	100%	42/42
2008	Full	100%	39/39
2007	Full	97.30%	36/37

#### PROS AND CONS:

##### Pros:

- Replication of components of a previous Innovative Professional Nursing Education Pilot Program will give additional support and validation for the original pilot program.
- Research findings from the pilot program will contribute to the body of nursing research related to creative approaches to address the nursing faculty shortage.
- Data resulting from the pilot program will contribute to the body of nursing research on the use of simulation in the clinical setting.
- The pilot program proposes to utilize staff, faculty and existing simulation materials effectively, sharing expertise and resources between the two pilot program partners.
- The pilot program expands clinical capacity for both partners in an environment in which clinical space is limited.

Cons:

- Strategies for providing alternate experiences for students who do not adapt to innovative model are not described.
- .As the model has not been widely tested, it may not be possible for programs to continue the model without ongoing funding.

**Rationale for Recommendation:**

Research generated from this innovative approach will result in the improvement in the quality and delivery of nursing education and provide opportunities for subsequent replication of innovative strategies in professional nursing education programs throughout the State of Texas. Project may provide evidence and data for rule revision or education guideline.

**Staff Recommendation:**

Move to grant the request from Tarleton State University in collaboration with Weatherford College that involves the use of BSN RN Lab Mentors in the implementation of the grant-funded project entitled *Using BSN RN Lab Mentors for Increasing Enrollment and Integrating Simulation Across the Curriculum: Metrics of Success*. (See draft letter in Attachment #3).

**OVERVIEW OF PROPOSAL FOR PILOT PROGRAM**  
**TARLETON STATE UNIVERSITY**  
**BACCALAUREATE DEGREE NURSING EDUCATION PROGRAM**  
**“USING BSN RN LAB MENTORS FOR INCREASING**  
**ENROLLMENT AND INTEGRATING SIMULATION ACROSS THE CURRICULUM”**

This Project provides an opportunity through the efficient use of faculty to increase the number of nursing students enrolled in each partner school during academic years 2012-13 and 2013-14 without increasing the number of faculty. The Project will also provide data on the effects of the model on student and program outcomes. Two schools, an associate degree nursing program, and a baccalaureate school of nursing, will utilize existing rural-based simulation labs to provide faculty developed high-fidelity scenarios appropriate to course content and learning objectives in three courses - two medical-surgical courses and a maternal-newborn course. Staff, faculty and existing simulation scenarios will be shared between the two programs. BSN-prepared lab mentors with strong clinical expertise will teach and validate competency education for three courses in each program. This approach will reduce the amount of time that faculty in the two schools must spend in competency education and validation and will allow more students to be admitted without increasing the number of faculty required. To fully implement this project which uses BSN-prepared nurses for competency education and validation, we are requesting an exemption for Rule 215.10 (d) and (f) and that this proposal be approved by the Board of Nursing of the State of Texas as an Innovative Professional Nursing Education Pilot Program.

Collaborations involve: Tarleton State University BSN Education Program and Weatherford College Associate Degree Nursing Education Program.

Exceptions are outlined on the next two pages, the Proposal Evaluation Form and Proposal Application follow.

Rule 215 from which an exception is requested	Explain the reason an exception is being requested.	If the Board grants a pilot program an exception to Rule 215, the applicant must demonstrate that the pilot program provides consumers with adequate protection. Explain how the proposed pilot program will achieve such a safeguard.
215.10 (d) The faculty member shall be responsible for the supervision of students in clinical learning experiences.	Permission for competency education and validation of students, using faculty developed , scenario-based simulation lab experiences to be transferred from masters or doctoral faculty to BSN RN mentors.	We believe there are sufficient safeguards to insure that students will receive an effective education, thereby protecting the public. Planned preparation of BSN, RN lab mentors for their role in the lab and faculty developed simulation learning experiences ensure students have the opportunity to meet course objectives. Faculty also will continue to complete formative and summative evaluation of students for the clinical course.

<p>215.10 (f) Faculty shall be responsible for student clinical practical evaluations. Clinical practice evaluations shall be correlated with level and/or course objectives and shall include a minimum of a formative and summative evaluation for each clinical in the curriculum</p>	<p>Faculty will continue to be responsible for summative clinical evaluation of students and will supervise students in clinical agencies.</p> <p>The THECB funded a two year project that replicates the North Central Texas Health Care Consortium (NCTHCC) best practice model of using clinically competent BSN lab mentors to teach and evaluate baccalaureate and associate degree students in the simulation labs at Tarleton State University and Weatherford College (project partner)</p> <p>Three courses in the program have been selected to serve as control and intervention groups for the project: a medical-surgical course, the maternal-child course and the pediatric course, and/or a second medical-surgical course. These courses were chosen because of existing simulation use by faculty and either large course enrollments combined with increasingly scarce clinical resources, and/ specialty areas with small inpatient units that offer the fewest clinical placement availabilities.</p>	<p>Rotating students through the simulation lab will reduce the faculty-to-student ratio in the clinical agency setting. Smaller numbers of students at any point in time provide greater opportunities for faculty to engage students in quality learning experiences. For example, clinical faculty may be assigned ten students but may only have six students in the clinical agency setting at any one point in time. Replacing observational with high fidelity simulation experiences is expected to enhance clinical judgment and confidence.</p> <p>Faculty who have been early adapters of simulation, in coordination with lab and technical staff, have developed simulation experiences for many high-risk, high-volume patient conditions that nursing students are likely to see in future practice but may only participate in as an observer during their student experience. The BSN Lab mentors will receive training in high fidelity manikin simulation, maintenance and instruction in pedagogy related to development of student mentoring techniques and methods of clinical instruction under the direction of the director of the simulation lab, a Masters prepared RN.</p> <p>At no time will BSN Lab Mentors who do not hold a MSN degree and appointment to the faculty be in the position of supervising students who are performing patient care. Their scope of responsibility extends only to teaching and evaluating skills in the simulation setting.</p>
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ASSOCIATE DEGREE NURSING

April 17, 2012

Tarleton State University  
Nursing Department  
Box T-0500  
Stephenville, Texas 76402  
Attention Dr. Elaine Evans, Department Head

Dear Dr. Evans:

The Weatherford College Associate Degree Nursing Program is pleased to be given the opportunity to function as the major partner with Tarleton State University BSN program in the project: Using BSN RN Lab Mentors for Increasing Enrollment and Integrating Simulation Across the Curriculum: Metrics of Success. The project, being submitted in the current Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board Nursing Innovation Grant Program Best Practices grant competition, will enable the two programs to carry out a replication research study designed to measure the impact of use of regional simulation centers staffed with BSN RN Lab Mentors, with the desired mutual goal of increasing the number of graduates each program is able to produce, without having to increase availability of MSN prepared faculty in the Simulation lab setting. In our rural setting, it is particularly beneficial for us to develop models that enable us to meet our desired outcomes despite limited resources of clinical site availability, funding for expensive simulation equipment, and faculty.

We believe our two programs have mutual programmatic goals of producing graduates who are prepared to function as beginning practitioners capable of providing safe, competent, coordinated care. We recognize the value of using clinical simulation activities within our programs to promote the development of competent clinical reasoning judgment in addition to clinical skill competency. We know the power of collaboration with BSN programs in the currently evolving environment of professional nursing education. We look forward to the results of the implementation of this grant-funded project.

Sincerely,

Katherine Boswell RN, MS  
Dean, Health & Human Sciences

Cheryl Livengood RN, MSN  
ADN Program Director

DRAFT LETTER

October 25, 2012

Elaine Evans, PhD, RN  
Department Head, Baccalaureate Nursing Program  
Tarleton State University  
P.O. Box T-500  
Stephenville, Texas 76402-0002

Dear Ms. Evans:

At the October 18-19, 2012 meeting, the members of the Texas Board of Nursing discussed the request from Tarleton State University Baccalaureate Degree Nursing Program in Stephenville to conduct an innovative pilot project using the BSN-prepared Lab Mentor model (previously piloted by Midwestern State University in Wichita Falls, Texas). This project would allow Tarleton State University to participate in a Nursing Innovation Grant Program (NIGP) administered by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board in collaboration with Weatherford College Associate Degree Program in Weatherford, Texas, and for which grant funding has been awarded. The title of the NIGP is "Using BSN RN Lab Mentors for Increasing Enrollment and Integrating Simulation Across the Curriculum: Metrics of Success".

Based upon the discussion and review of documents, the Board approved the application for the proposed pilot project from Tarleton State University which will waive the faculty requirements and allow use of BSN-prepared faculty and issued the requirement below. This will allow Tarleton State University to participate in the collaborative project with Weatherford College in Weatherford, Texas.

Requirement:

Rule 227.5(a), *Pilot Programs for Innovative Applications to Professional Nursing Education*, states that "All nursing education pilot programs shall be subject to monitoring and evaluation by the Board to ensure compliance with the criteria of this rule and obtain evidence that research goals are being pursued".

**Therefore**, the Department Head of the Tarleton State University Baccalaureate Degree Pilot Program, "Using BSN RN Lab Mentors for Increasing Enrollment and Integrating Simulation Across the Curriculum: Metrics of Success", shall submit reports of the results of the innovative educational application including data and analysis by the specified dates:

- A written status report on the pilot program by August 1, 2013 to include first year data on the utilization of BSN-prepared Lab Mentors, identified problems, and successes.
- A final report upon conclusion of the pilot program on or before 11/21/2014 to include all pilot program data and analyses, evaluation of the utilization of the BSN-prepared Lab Mentors, evaluation of the successes or failures of students participating in the pilot program, and evaluation of program outcomes.

The Board congratulates Tarleton State University upon its opportunity to participate in the NIGP and looks forward to the report of the outcomes. If you have questions, please contact Board Staff at [sandi.emerson@bon.texas.gov](mailto:sandi.emerson@bon.texas.gov) or 512-463-4631.

Sincerely,

Kristin K. Benton, MSN, RN  
Board President

Sandi Emerson, MSN, RN  
Nursing Consultant for Education

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

President, Tarleton State University, Stephenville, Texas  
President, Weatherford College, Weatherford, Texas  
Chair, Nursing Program, Weatherford College, Weatherford, Texas