

**Consideration of Change in Approval Status  
From Full Approval with Warning to Conditional Approval  
Western Governors University in Austin, Texas  
Baccalaureate Degree Nursing Education Program**

**Summary of Request:**

Consider the proposed change in approval status for the Western Governors (WGU) Baccalaureate Degree Nursing (BSN) Education Program in Austin, Texas, from Full Approval with Warning to Conditional Approval based upon the 2015 NCLEX-RN® examination pass rate, review of the 2015 Nursing Education Program Information Survey, findings in the 2014 Self-Study Report, and compliance with Rule 215.

**Historical Perspective:**

- Western Governors University BSN program has been in operation since 2009.
- Jan Jones-Schenk, DHSc, RN, NE-BC, Dean was appointed BSN program director in 2011 and meets all qualifications set forth by Board Rule 215.6, Administration and Organization.
- WGU BSN program is accredited by the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (CCNE). The most recent program evaluation occurred in 2013. The next evaluation is scheduled for 2023.
- WGU is also accredited by the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities. The most recent program evaluation occurred in 2014. The next evaluation is scheduled for 2017.
- The NCLEX-RN® examination pass rates for the past five years (5) are included in the table below:

<b>NCLEX Examination Year</b>	<b>BON Approval Status</b>	<b>NCLEX-RN® Examination Pass Rate</b>	<b>Number of First Time Candidates (Passed/Total)</b>
2015	Full with Warning	70.59%	12/17
2014	Full	71.43%	5/7
2013	Full	73.33%	11/15
2012	Full	87.50%	7/8
2011	Initial	New Program	N/A

- Due to the 2013 NCLEX-RN® examination pass rate of 73.33%, the Program Director and faculty were required to submit a Self-Study Report (SSR) in 2014 that would evaluate factors that may have contributed to the graduates' performance on the NCLEX-RN® examination and a description of the corrective measures to be implemented.
- The Program Director and faculty members identified factors in the SSR that may have contributed to the decline in the pass rate and designed the following corrective measures:
  - Review and revise admission GPA requirements to include Test of Essential Academic Skills (TEAS V) prior to admission to better correlate student success with NCLEX-RN®;

- Review ESL student success with NCLEX-RN® and revise test preparation to include implementation of test taking strategies;
  - Review and revise the Assessment Technology Incorporated (ATI®) specialty scores and revise curriculum to include changing the order of clinical rotations to better prepare students for the examination; and
  - In view of faculty turnover, review and revise faculty support to include evaluation of mentor effectiveness.
- Due to the 2014 NCLEX-RN® Examination pass rate of 71.43%, approval status of the program was changed from Full Approval to Full Approval with Warning at the January 2015 Board meeting.
  - Board education consultants Jo Queen, Janice Hooper, and Virginia Ayars conducted a site visit on May 27, 2015.
  - Based upon the survey visit and Board Report of October 22, 2015, a requirement was mandated that the program shall submit to Board Staff no later than January 1, 2016 a plan for including the *Differentiated Essential Competencies of Graduates of Texas Nursing Programs* (DECs) in the curriculum and preparing faculty to implement the DECs throughout the program for students in Texas.
  - Currently, 166 students are enrolled in the program (plus an additional 8 who have graduated and are pending for the 2016 NCLEX year) as follows:

Enrollments by NCLEX year	Number of Students Enrolled
2016 (Oct. 1, 2015 -Sept. 30 2016)	27
2017 (Oct. 1, 2016 -Sept. 30 2017)	69
2018 (Oct. 1, 2017 -Sept. 30 2018)	78

**Rationale for Recommendations:**

Rule 215.4(c)(3)(B) states: “A program may be placed on conditional approval status if the pass rate of first-time NCLEX-RN® candidates . . . . is less than 80% for three (3) consecutive examination years . . . .”

**Staff Recommendations:**

Move to change the approval status for the Western Governors University Baccalaureate Degree Nursing Education Program in Austin, Texas from Full Approval with Warning to Conditional Approval based upon the 2015 NCLEX-RN® examination pass rate, review of the 2015 Nursing Education Program Information Survey, findings in the 2014 Self-Study Report, and compliance with Rule 215, and impose the conditions and requirements in the attached letter and Board Order (Attachment #1).

DRAFT LETTER

January 25, 2016

Jan Jones-Schenk, DHSc, RN, NE-BC  
Baccalaureate Degree Nursing Education Program  
Western Governors University  
221 West 6Th Street, Suite 1050  
Austin, TX 78701

Dear Dr. Jones-Schenk:

At the January 21-22, 2016 meeting, members of the Texas Board of Nursing (Board) discussed the approval status of the Western Governors University Baccalaureate Degree Nursing Education Program in Austin, Texas. Members of the Board wish to thank you and Dr. Kim Kelly-Cortez, PhD, RN, Assistant Director of Nursing, and Cherie Lowell, MSN, RN, Director of Nursing Operations for being present at the meeting to answer questions.

Based upon the discussion and review of information, it was the decision of the Board to change the approval status of the Western Governors University Baccalaureate Degree Nursing Education Program in Austin, Texas, from Full Approval with Warning to Conditional Approval based upon the 2015 NCLEX-RN® examination pass rate, review of the 2015 Nursing Education Program Information Survey, findings in the 2014 Self-Study Report, and compliance with Rule 215, and impose the conditions and requirements in the attached Board Order.

If you have any questions or if we may be of any assistance, please contact Board Staff at [gayle.varnell@bon.texas.gov](mailto:gayle.varnell@bon.texas.gov) or 512-621-5179.

Sincerely,

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

Copy: Robert Mendenhall, President, Western Governors University  
Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education  
Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities

**BEFORE THE TEXAS BOARD OF NURSING**

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**ORDER OF THE BOARD**

In the Matter of  
Western Governors University  
Baccalaureate Degree Nursing Education Program  
Austin, Texas

A public meeting of the Texas Board of Nursing, hereinafter referred to as the Board, was held on January 21, 2016, 333 Guadalupe, Tower II, Room 225, Austin, Texas, to consider the approval status of the Western Governors University Baccalaureate Degree Nursing Education Program in Austin, Texas, based upon the NCLEX-RN® examination pass rate for 2015, review of the 2015 Nursing Education Program Information Survey, findings in the 2014 Self-Study Report, and compliance with Rule 215 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 representatives from Western Governors University in Austin, Texas, and other interested parties, if any, the Board hereby CHANGES the approval status of the Western Governors University Baccalaureate Degree Nursing Education Program in Austin, Texas, from FULL APPROVAL WITH WARNING to CONDITIONAL APPROVAL and hereby imposes the following conditions and requirements:

1. The program shall not enroll students while on conditional approval status.
2. The program will remain on conditional approval status until the program demonstrates a pass rate for first-time candidates of at least 80% on the 2016 NCLEX-RN® examination. The NCLEX-RN® examination year is October 1, 2015 through September 30, 2016.
3. The program must demonstrate full compliance with Rule 215 prior to consideration of a change in approval status.

Entered this 21<sup>st</sup> day of January, 2016

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