

**Proposal to Establish A New Nursing Education Program  
National American University in Austin, Texas  
Baccalaureate Degree Nursing Education Program**

**Summary of Request:**

Consider the National American University (NAU) proposal to establish a new Baccalaureate Degree Nursing (BSN) Education Program in Austin, Texas and the report of the survey visit (See Attachment #1). The final revised proposal was provided electronically to members of the Texas Board of Nursing (Board). A notice of public hearing has been posted (See Attachment #2).

**Historical Perspective:**

- NAU is a private university founded by Clarence Jacobsen as the National School of Business in Rapid City, South Dakota in 1941. Harold D. Buckingham bought the school in 1962 and changed the name three years later to the National College of Business. Campus expansion began in 1974 with a second location in South Dakota and new locations in Colorado and Minnesota. The name was changed to NAU in 1996; the university continued to grow and add campuses over the years including an online campus in 1998.
- NAU is a regionally accredited, multi-campus, proprietary institution of higher learning offering associate, baccalaureate, master's, and doctoral degrees in technical and professional fields. Administrative offices are located in Rapid City, South Dakota. The university has been fully accredited by the Higher Learning Commission (HLC) since 1985. The last reaffirmation of accreditation was 2007-2008; the next reaffirmation of accreditation will be in 2014-2015.
- The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) issued NAU an exemption for THECB approval based on the institution's accreditation with the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools-Higher Learning Commission (NCA-HLC), a regional accrediting agency recognized by THECB. This exemption will continue as long as NAU maintains accreditation standards acceptable to NCA-HLC and makes no substantive change that exceeds the basis on which it is exempt. Additionally, the Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) issued NAU an exemption for TWC approval in October 2004.
- The first NAU nursing program, an associate degree program, began in 2005 in Missouri. The same year, the Online RN to BSN program was established. The NAU School of Nursing (SON) was created in August 2007 as nursing programs were added throughout the NAU system. Today, NAU offers associate, baccalaureate, and/or master's degrees in nursing through distance learning and on seven on-site campuses. NAU has programmatic accreditation from the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (CCNE). The CCNE certificate of accreditation was issued on March 7, 2011 to be valid through December 31, 2016. Six cohorts from four campuses have completed the BSN program. Official NCLEX-RN® results are available for two cohorts from the Bloomington, Minnesota campus with pass rates of 80% (8/10) and 60% (12/20). Official pass rates of the remaining cohorts are pending.
- Administrative approval was granted to NAU in 2007 for a new branch campus in Austin. Online and traditional courses were offered to a growing student body over the ensuing years. The first student graduated in 2009. As of summer 2013, NAU-Austin has had 75 graduates. Commencement ceremonies moved from a small auditorium in the Round Rock Independent School District to the AT&T Center in downtown Austin. NAU-Austin student enrollments have grown to almost 300 students. The typical student is 28-34 years of age. The student body is diverse.
- A well-developed, comprehensive first draft of the proposal was received in the Board office on January 30, 2014 and reviewed by Board Staff. The proposal was deemed complete in April 2014 and a site visit was conducted on May 28, 2014, by Board education consultant Virginia Ayars, EdD, MS, RN.

## **Summary of Proposal:**

### Overview of the Proposal:

- NAU proposes to establish a new generic BSN Education Program in Austin, Texas. The proposal requests enrollment of an initial cohort of twenty-four (24) students, and a continuing annual enrollment of one cohort of twenty-four (24) students, to begin in Fall 2014. The projected graduation date for the first cohort will be August 2017.
- The proposed program consists of a nursing foundational core of general education courses (79.5 quarter credit hours) and a nursing clinical core of nursing courses (107 quarter credit hours). The program is designed to be delivered through a combination of face-to-face and online courses, and faculty-supervised clinical experiences in a variety of health care settings. Students may take nursing foundational core courses as full or part-time students. Once admitted to the nursing clinical core, students are required to carry a full course load each quarter for two years.
- Clinical learning experiences will be offered in health care facilities in Central Texas, with pediatric experiences provided at the Shriners' Hospital for Children in Galveston. Clinical affiliations include HealthSouth Rehabilitation Hospital, St. Mark's Medical Center, VA Medical Center Temple, VA Waco, and Hospice Austin.

### Rationale and Need for the Program:

- Survey results and literature review findings support the need for a new pre-licensure BSN program in the Austin area. A summary of the evidence is organized around four major factors: 1) demand for nurses; 2) supply of nurses; 3) educational preparation and preference; and 4) educational capacity.
- The rationale to establish the BSN program in Austin is based on a review of data from the Texas Center for Nursing Workforce Studies that projects an increasing need for more registered nurses in Texas. A survey of clinical facilities indicated the availability of rich clinical learning experiences to accommodate and support NAU nursing students.
- Although other nursing education programs in the Austin area have been notified that NAU plans to establish a BSN program and concern has been expressed about clinical availability, the clinical sites for the NAU nursing students are those utilized less frequently by other professional nursing education programs.
- Austin Community College (ACC) has endorsed establishment of the NAU program and entered into an articulation agreement for the ACC associate degree nursing education program graduates to complete the BSN at NAU.
- Letters of support from community leaders in the Central Texas area indicate strong support for the proposed nursing program.

### Administration and Organization:

- The SON, as an integral part of NAU, is in concert with the university mission, core values, and purposes. Consistent with the overall university mission, the SON mission is to prepare competent nursing graduates by providing a caring, diverse, and student centered environment that fosters critical thinking and enhances holistic healthcare across the life span.
  - Dr. Jere Hammer, the chair of the proposed program, meets the qualifications of Board Rule 215.6 to assume administrative leadership. Dr. Hammer has 34 years of professional nursing experience with 22 years dedicated to nursing education in Texas. Dr. Hammer has started a vocational nursing education program and directed two associate degree nursing education programs, as well as taught at the baccalaureate and master's level for the past five and one-half years.
  - The SON dean reports directly to the provost at Central Administration. The dean participates on the following university councils: Curriculum, Graduate, and Academic Affairs. The dean has the responsibility and full authority to administer all aspects of the BSN program.
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#### Availability of Faculty and Clinical Sites:

- Three prospective faculty members have been identified. They meet the requirements of Rule 215.7 and are appropriate for their prospective teaching assignments.
- Experienced nurse educators will be recruited locally, regionally, and nationally for full- or part-time classroom and/or clinical teaching positions. Existing online faculty members teaching for the NAU-SON are potential sources for qualified faculty at NAU-Austin. Potential sources for new full-time and adjunct qualified nursing faculty include new graduates; nurses with clinical experience, but no teaching experience; and experienced nurse educators. New MSN and PhD graduates will be recruited from the University of Texas at Austin School of Nursing; UT Health Science Center – San Antonio; University of the Incarnate Word – San Antonio; Texas A&M University – Corpus Christi; Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center; and other universities in Texas. MSN-prepared faculty will also be recruited from among NAU graduates from the MSN program with an emphasis in nursing education.
- The proposed program will use alternate sites for clinical learning experiences that will not impact the current use of clinical sites by other BSN education programs in the Austin area. The program has secured commitments for clinical learning experiences from a variety of health care institutions in the Central Texas area as well as Galveston, including: HealthSouth Rehabilitation Hospital, Westminster Manor, St. Mark's Medical Center, Hospice Austin, Hyde Park Surgery Center, Northwest Surgery Center, VA Medical Center Temple, VA Waco, and Shriners' Hospital for Children.

#### Financial Support and Resources:

- The BSN program at Austin was approved by the NAU Board of Governors in 2009 with appropriate monies allocated to develop and establish the program of study. The university has provided and will continue to provide 100% of the financial support and resources needed to operate the proposed professional nursing education program through tuition, fees, and existing revenue sources.
- NAU is financially sound and fiscally responsible with significant assets. A summary of the most recent financial statements provided in the proposal shows continued financial growth and stability for the past three years. A projected two-year budget for program operation with clinical core students was also included.
- The survey visit indicated that the requirements of Board Rule 215 regarding facilities, resources, and services are completely addressed in all categories.

#### Program of Study:

- The SON mission is to prepare competent graduates by providing a caring, diverse, and student centered environment; fostering critical thinking; and focusing on holistic health care throughout the lifespan. The SON vision, to develop the infrastructure of the SON and embody excellence in nursing education, is inspired by core values of high quality nursing education; collaborative community partnerships; caring and supportive learning environments; career advancement; and professional development.
- The SON philosophy and conceptual model are derived from the SON and NAU mission statements and guided by the works of nursing theorists Benner and Leininger and McFarland. Reflective of faculty beliefs that nursing education should prepare culturally competent, caring practitioners to meet the needs of a rapidly changing society, four primary constructs provide an organizing structure for the curriculum.
- The model emphasizes the importance of culturally sensitive, lifelong learning at every stage of clinical competence from novice to expert. The four constructs of caring, experiential, clinical judgment, and holistic health/illness/death contribute to clinical competence. Caring represents the art of nursing. Holistic health/illness/death represents the continuum of health for the whole person at every stage of life, including death. Experiential represents the basis for clinical learning experiences where theory is put into practice. Finally, clinical judgment represents the ability to gather and use all forms of data to make sound patient care decisions.

- The nursing curriculum for all BSN programs in the NAU system follow the same format with individualization based upon state regulations that are specific to the state.
- The Differentiated Essential Competencies of Graduates of Texas Nursing Programs (DECs) (2010) are embedded in the curriculum.
- The nursing clinical core includes 107 quarter credit hours of didactic and clinical coursework and provides the graduate with the knowledge, skills, and attitudes to practice nursing safely and effectively as a generalist. The BSN clinical core is designed to be completed in eight quarters. Students are required to register for full-time hours each quarter. All nursing courses must be taken at NAU. The nursing courses are sequential, and the successful completion of each course is a prerequisite for admission to the next level or successive course.
- The proposed degree plan includes general education courses, didactic nursing courses, and skills lab and clinical learning experiences. The 107 quarter credit hours are comprised of the following: 710 lecture hours, 210 lab hours, and 765 clinical hours.

Total Evaluation Plan:

- Program evaluation occurs at three levels - campus, school, and university. Campus and school level program evaluations are guided by the BSN program assessment plan, which focuses on program outcomes. University level program evaluation is guided by the program review process, which extends beyond outcome review to all aspects of the program.
- The program's total evaluation plan is well developed and provides measurable indicators of achievement. Detailed indicators of academic effectiveness and BSN student learning outcomes are presented in the proposal. The required elements of Board Rule 215.13 are fully addressed.

**Comments from Survey Visit:**

Board Staff met with regional and campus administration, the proposed director of the program, and support staff, as well as toured the facilities.

Pros:

- The proposed Program Director is experienced in pre-licensure nursing education in Texas, and has a strong background as a nursing program administrator.
- NAU has identified and established clinical affiliations with multiple and diverse clinical sites that are not presently being utilized by other nursing education programs.
- The administration has committed the resources to the implementation of this new program.

Cons:

- Making curriculum changes when a national curriculum is in place requires more time.

**Staff Recommendation:**

Move to grant initial approval to National American University to establish a new Baccalaureate Degree Nursing Education Program in Austin, Texas, and impose the conditions/requirements in the attached Board Order (See Attachment #3).

**TEXAS BOARD OF NURSING**  
**SURVEY VISIT PROGRAM REPORT**  
**Professional Nursing Education Program**

**NAME OF NURSING PROGRAM:** National American University in Austin, Texas Baccalaureate Degree Nursing Education Program

**PROPOSED DIRECTOR:** Jere Hammer, PhD, RN

**REASON FOR SURVEY:** New Proposal

**DATE:** May 28, 2014

**SURVEY VISITOR:** Virginia Ayars, EdD, MS, RN

**Summary from Survey Visit:** Board Staff met with Jere Hammer, PhD, RN, proposed nursing program director, university regional and campus administration, and support staff. Regional Articulation Director and Academic Dean Dr. Mark Winkleman expressed his endorsement of the proposed nursing education program. The tour of the campus validated that the National American University campus is clean, well-maintained, well lighted, and has ample open parking. Comprehensive student services are available to students on campus.

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
(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 education program.	Strong administrative support was evident during the survey visit.	Criteria met.
(b) An appropriately equipped skills laboratory shall be provided to accommodate maximum number of students allowed for the program. (1) The laboratory shall be equipped with hot and cold running water. (2) The laboratory shall have adequate storage for equipment.	The nursing skills lab is equipped with hot and cold running water and adequate storage for equipment and supplies. Six fully electric hospital beds, simulated head walls, and low fidelity adult manikins are located in one area of the lab to replicate an acute care hospital setting. Two additional specialty beds are located on either side of the simulation control room. One area is set up for maternal-child simulations. A birthing bed, high fidelity mother and baby human patient simulators will be used to simulate labor and delivery and newborn assessment scenarios. The other specialty area will be used for critical care scenarios.	Criteria met.

<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 director/coordinator 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 nursing program director has a spacious modern office with a round table and chairs conducive to private conferences.</p> <p>Nursing program faculty offices are conveniently located near the nursing skills/simulation lab. The program director and administrative assistant are across the hall from each other. The double faculty office is at the end of the short hallway.</p> <p>Files will be stored in faculty offices and equipment in the skills lab. Sensitive program and personnel files will be stored in a secure file cabinet in the administrative assistant's office.</p> <p>Three classrooms, which can comfortably accommodate 24 students, are equipped with a white board, projection equipment, and an Internet-accessible computer teaching station. Furniture is free standing to allow different configurations to enhance teaching/learning strategies.</p> <p>The campus conference room may be scheduled for use by the nursing program faculty and staff as needed.</p>	<p>Criteria 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>Tutors and academic coaches are available to assist students in select courses. Many online courses offer online tutoring assistance. Test proctoring may be required for formal exams in online courses. Students are able to take the exam online using a webcam in the virtual presence of a NAU test proctor.</p> <p>The NAU-Austin campus provides open access to students through computers, networks, and the Internet to promote educational excellence by resource sharing, innovation and communication.</p> <p>Computers are available in the library/reading room and computer labs at the NAU-Austin campus.</p>	<p>Criteria met.</p>

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 National American University  
To Establish A  
Baccalaureate Degree Nursing Education Program  
in Austin, Texas

Date and Time: July 17, 2014 at 9:20 AM  
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 3, 2014.

Address written testimony to:  
Katherine Thomas, MN, RN, FAAN, Executive Director  
Texas Board of Nursing  
333 Guadalupe Street, Suite 3-460  
Austin, Texas 78701-3942

## DRAFT LETTER

July 21, 2014

Jere Hammer, PhD, RN, Chair  
Baccalaureate Degree Nursing Education Program  
National American University  
13801 Burnet Road, Suite 300  
Austin, Texas 78727

Dear Dr. Hammer:

At the July 17-18, 2014 meeting, members of the Texas Board of Nursing discussed the National American University Proposal to Establish a New Baccalaureate Degree Nursing Education Program in Austin, Texas, and the report of the May 28, 2014 survey visit. The Board wishes to thank Dean Dodie Serafini, Dr. Mark Winkleman, and you for being present to answer questions. Based upon the discussion and review of documents, it was the decision of the Board to grant initial approval to National American University to establish a new Baccalaureate Degree Nursing Education Program in Austin, Texas, and impose the conditions/requirements in the attached Board Order.

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,

Katherine Thomas, MN, RN, FAAN  
Executive Director

Copy: Higher Learning Commission  
Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education  
Dr. Jerry L. Gallentine, President, National American University  
Dr. Mark Winkleman, Academic Dean, National American University - Austin

**BEFORE THE TEXAS BOARD OF NURSING**

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In the Matter of  
National American University  
Baccalaureate Degree Nursing Education Program  
In Austin, Texas

**ORDER OF THE BOARD**

A public meeting of the Texas Board of Nursing, hereinafter referred to as the Board, was held on July 17, 2014, 333 Guadalupe, Tower II, Room 225, Austin, Texas, to consider the National American University proposal to establish a new Baccalaureate Degree Nursing Education Program in Austin, Texas, based upon the review of the proposal and survey visit report, 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 the representatives from National American University in Austin, Texas, and other interested parties, if any, the Board hereby grants INITIAL APPROVAL of the National American University Baccalaureate Degree Nursing Education Program in Austin, Texas and imposes the following conditions/requirements:

1. The program shall not admit more than one (1) cohort of twenty-four (24) students in the first year and one (1) cohort of twenty-four (24) students in subsequent years until the program achieves Full Approval from the Board.

Entered this 17<sup>th</sup> day of July, 2014

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Katherine Thomas, MN, RN, FAAN  
Executive Director