

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

**Summary of Request:**

Consider the South University (SU) proposal to establish a new Baccalaureate Degree Nursing (BSN) Education Program in Austin, Texas. The final revised proposal was made available online to members of the Board. A notice of public hearing has been posted (See Attachment #1).

**Historical Perspective:**

- SU is a private university originally established as Draughon's Practical Business College in Savannah, Georgia. The college was acquired in 1974 by the South family and has had several changes in name and organizational structure. The Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) Commission on Colleges accredited the institution (known as South College) in 2001, and later that year with the addition of graduate level degrees, the name was again changed to South University.
- SU has campuses in nine (9) states and awards undergraduate and graduate degrees that include Doctoral degrees in seven (7) disciplines. Generic BSN and RN-to-BSN nursing programs are currently offered in six (6) states.
- In 2011 SU announced the opening of a location in Austin, Texas, its first campus in the Southwest, and expanded the offerings of the Master's Degrees in Nursing to include majors in Adult Health Nurse Practitioner, Family Nurse Practitioner, and Nurse Educator.
- The Austin campus of SU has a total enrollment of approximately 200 students.
- Board Staff received an official letter of intent from SU to establish a new BSN program in Austin, Texas, in October, 2013, though a verbal intent had been received earlier.
- Following conversations between Board Staff and Dr. Linda Dune, the proposed director, the proposal was received in Board office in April 2014.
- A site visit was conducted by Board Staff on June 4, 2014 (See Attachment #2).

**Summary of Proposal:**

Overview of the Proposal:

- The proposed SU BSN program is built on the quarter hour format. Program requirements include sixty-eight (68) quarter credit hours of general education courses and ninety (90) quarter credit hours of nursing courses.
- The program is designed to be completed in 3.25 years for the total curriculum. Students will enter the nursing major after completion of general education requirements. Transfer credits will be evaluated for meeting the general education requirements. Students who have completed the general education requirements may finish the program in 1.75 years.
- An initial cohort of twenty-four (24) students who have met the general education requirements will be enrolled in nursing courses for Fall 2014 and will graduate from the program in Spring 2016. The program plans to admit one cohort of twenty-four (24) students each year until the program is on Full Approval.
- SU provides all general education courses to students at the Austin campus in face-to-face classes or by an online format.
- SACS has been notified that the BSN is being established on the SU campus.

Rationale and Need for the Program:

- The rationale for the program is based upon data from the Texas Center for Nursing Workforce Studies that projects a growing need for more registered nurses in Texas and upon the population growth in Texas.
- Program data from the Austin area indicates that the current BSN programs are not able to accommodate all qualified applicants.

#### Administration and Organization:

- SU in Austin, Texas, was visited by SACS program evaluators on February 18, 2014, as part of the university's process for re-authorization. Preliminary results indicated there are no recommendations for any SU campus.
- The Austin campus received a letter of exemption from the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) on December 7, 2011 and exemption from the Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) on November 9, 2010.
- The College of Nursing and Public Health (CONPH) at SU (where the nursing programs are housed) was granted a ten (10) year accreditation by the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (CCNE) for all baccalaureate and master's programs effective April 20, 2010. CCNE accreditation applies to the Austin campus along with the other campuses. CCNE requires that programs submit a substantive change proposal when a new site is established.
- SU has BSN programs on campuses in seven (7) states including Texas.
- SU's Austin campus is a wholly-owned subsidiary of South Education - Texas LLC, with the home office in Savannah, Georgia.
- A projected budget for the first two (2) years of operation has been included in the proposal.
- The organizational chart indicates that the program director for the BSN program reports directly to the Acting Dean of the College of Nursing and Public Health.
- Dr. Linda Dune is the projected BSN director at the Austin Campus and meets all qualifications for program director in Rule 215.6.
- Dr. Dune will be authorized with a full range of responsibilities including:
  - ▶ final approval of teaching staff;
  - ▶ selection of clinical sites with the clinical coordinator;
  - ▶ making final decisions on student admission, progression, probation and dismissal on the Austin campus;
  - ▶ completion of credentialing form for faculty approval which is then sent to the program chair for final approval;
  - ▶ credentialing all adjunct faculty without the CON chair's input;
  - ▶ ensuring current file contents for each faculty member that include current validation of licensure or credentials;
  - ▶ completing and submitting all required reports with assistance from the CONPH secretary (to be interviewed and hired after program approval);
  - ▶ completing the affidavit of graduation with assistance from the Austin campus registrar;
  - ▶ participating in the annual proposed budget for the CON Austin campus;
  - ▶ sharing the responsibility for an environment conducive to the teaching/learning process;
  - ▶ providing leadership for the development and implementation of the curriculum by the faculty;
  - ▶ leading all faculty endeavors such as faculty development, recruitment, performance review, promotion and retention on the Austin campus;
  - ▶ maintaining the relationship with the Board of Nursing;
  - ▶ engaging in clinical affiliation visits and conducting the Professional Advisory Committee meetings in the Spring and Fall;
  - ▶ providing agency support as needed for any special student oriented or Austin College of Nursing events; and
  - ▶ overseeing staffing and quality on the Austin campus.
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#### Faculty:

- The program has received thirteen (13) unsolicited applications for faculty positions in the BSN program.
- A Clinical Coordinator has been hired with plans to hire an additional full time faculty member by September, 2014, and a second in January, 2015.
- The faculty numbers will increase exponentially under the end of the fifth (5th) fiscal year when nine (9) faculty are projected for 72 students.
- A table indicating the year-by-year growth in faculty numbers is included in the proposal.
- The Faculty Handbook has been reviewed and found to be in compliance with required rules related to faculty policies and faculty organization. It also includes information to guide the faculty members in their teaching roles.
- Faculty workload for nursing faculty takes clinical supervision into account.
- Funding for faculty development is included in the budget.
- Since the BSN program will be used a standard curriculum used in other SU programs, faculty will

- have input into the curriculum through the director and through faculty meetings.
- National meetings include all levels of the CONPH. Monthly meetings between Program Directors, Chairs, and Deans via web/phone conference for all programs including public health. All leadership also attend the monthly College of Nursing meeting with all nursing faculty. Dr. Dune will meet weekly with the Acting Dean.
- At the local level, a monthly meeting with College of Nursing faculty is held in Austin. Agenda items include issues regarding curriculum, clinical affiliations, workload, handbooks, nursing student concerns, and general administrative issues. After issues are discussed at the local level, they are forwarded to the appropriate national committee. After a process of consideration and vote by a faculty group, a final approval is determined by the Council of Deans and Council of Presidents.
- Faculty on all campuses are required to serve on at least one (1) national university committee dealing with curriculum, handbooks, assessment, and policy.

#### Students

- The program plans for an initial enrollment of twenty-four (24) students per year beginning in October 2014.
- The program will seek to enroll students in the Austin area through advertising and through the Nursing Centralized Application Service (NursingCAS).
- The Student Handbook has been reviewed and found to be in compliance with required student policies and information related to eligibility issues.
- Student progression concerns are handled within weekly overall campus administration meetings.

#### Program of Study:

- The nursing program provides a curriculum in which course content progresses from simple to complex, individual to family and community, culminating in a leadership/management course in the final quarter of the program.
- SU BSN program is built upon a core curriculum which includes a strong foundation of liberal education of science and arts that prepares students to study nursing.
- The essential standards within the nursing curriculum focus on patient safety and quality care; evidence-based practice; use of information technology; healthcare, social, financial, and regulatory policies; communications; health promotion; and professionalism.
- The nursing curriculum for all BSN programs in SU follow the same format with individualization based upon state regulations that are specific to the state.
- The description of the curriculum in the proposal indicates that all content requirements in Rule 215.9 are present in the program of study.
- All nursing courses are taught in a face-to-face format with small classes and individual faculty attention to students.
- The *Differentiated Essential Competencies of Graduates of Texas Nursing Programs* (DECs) have been woven throughout the curriculum.

#### Clinical Learning Experiences:

- Each clinical course will include simulation laboratory experiences prior to hands-on practice in clinical settings.
- Each clinical course correlates to a didactic/classroom course in the four (4) major content areas of medical/surgical, maternal/child, pediatrics, and mental health with a 3:1 clinical to classroom ratio. The total number of clinical hours is 1130.
- A thorough description of each course and planned clinical experiences is detailed in the proposal.
- There are twelve (12) signed clinical contracts in the proposal with pending negotiations with many other clinical facilities. Clinical settings will be selected by the Clinical Coordinator and Program Director to meet the clinical objectives.
- The impact of SU students in the clinical settings is expected to be minimal due to the number of students.
- Other programs in the Austin area have been notified that SU plans to begin a BSN program and concern has been expressed about clinical placements.
- SU plans a ratio of one (1) faculty to eight (8) students in the clinical area, except for the last semester when preceptors will be used.

#### Facilities, Resources, and Services:

- SU has a range of support staff available to the nursing program.
- A full-time Information Technology Specialist will be available to provide maintenance of equipment and programming support for the simulation laboratory.

- One new administrative assistant will be added to maintain program records, track clinical affiliations, organize program events, assist with budget proposals, provide needed documentation to clinical sites, track program expenses, and other duties as assigned.
- The current location of the program will be on the Austin campus at 7700 West Parmer Lane, Austin, Texas, and it is fully functional and equipped for the program. (See survey visit report in Attachment #2.) A new campus will be constructed in Round Rock for completion in early 2015. Dr. Dune is involved in planning the nursing department.
- The proposed campus will have thirteen (13) classrooms, three (3) laboratories, an academic success center, and two (2) conference rooms. Classrooms are designed to seat up to thirty (30) students.
- A counseling center will be provided.
- All entrances and hallways are currently monitored with cameras and spaces are secure. This will be true at the new campus also.
- The 3,000+ square foot nursing laboratory and storage area will be fully equipped with technology, high and low fidelity simulation mannequins, six (6) hospital beds, a crib, bassinet, a Stryker frame, a medication cart, a crash cart, and an isolation cart with learning materials and supplies.
- The new building will provide ample private offices for faculty in a dedicated nursing faculty suite.
- The online electronic library can be accessed by students off campus and includes over 95 databases in all disciplines, including over 50,000 journals.
- The library at the current location provides students with a comfortable space to seek information and study. Reference librarians are available and provide orientation to new students.
- The library serves as the Center for Academic Success which schedules tutoring and offers a collection of resources to help students improve their critical thinking and information literacy skills.
- Other student services include a Career Services Department and a Student Financial Services Department.

Records and Reports:

- Secured filing cabinets for faculty and student files are available.
- Record retention policies of SU will be followed.

Total Evaluation Plan:

- The program's total evaluation plan follows the CCNE evaluation format and includes the required components to meet Rule 215.13.

**Pros and Cons:**

Pros:

- The proposed Program Director is experienced in BSN education in Texas and demonstrates strong administrative skills.
- SU has contracted several clinical facilities that are not presently being utilized by other nursing programs.
- SU plans for small classes and clinical ratios of one (1) faculty to eight (8) students.

Cons:

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

**Staff Recommendation:**

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

**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 South University  
To Establish A  
Baccalaureate Degree Nursing Education Program  
in Austin, Texas

Date and Time: July 17, 2014 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 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

**TEXAS BOARD OF NURSING  
SITE VISIT REPORT FOR NEW PROGRAM  
(Professional Nursing Education Programs)**

NAME OF NURSING PROGRAM: South University in Austin, Texas  
 DEAN OR DIRECTOR: Linda Dune, PhD, RN  
 REASON FOR SURVEY: Site Visit for Proposed Program      DATE: June 4, 2014  
 SURVEY VISITOR: Janice I. Hooper, PhD, RN, FRE

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.

STANDARD/CRITERIA	EVIDENCE	COMMENTS
<p><b>§215.11 Facilities, Resources, and Services</b>            (a) The governing entity shall be responsible for providing:            (1) educational facilities,            (2) resources, and            (3) services which support the effective development and implementation of the professional nursing education program.</p>	<p>Toured complete site in Building A, College of Nursing and Public Health: classrooms, computer labs, storage areas, library, conference rooms, executive offices, study rooms, reception area with waiting/display room, physical therapy department, faculty offices, student services, lounges, and noted auditorium that is available for large meetings or graduation ceremonies. There is ample parking space around the building. The building and all spaces are secured with locks and cameras.</p>	<p>All spaces in the present building are furnished in modern taste. The current spaces will accommodate the new program since they have an RN-to-BSN program in place. After the move to the new campus, the nursing programs will enjoy a more spacious area that will be conveniently arranged for their department. Dr. Dune is involved in the planning. A full range of student services are currently available in one wing of their present building. Lab equipment is available in storage areas to broaden the skills lab experiences</p> <p>Criterion met</p>
<p>(b) An appropriately equipped skills laboratory shall be provided to accommodate the 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 and supplies.</p>		<p>The nursing skills lab has six (6) beds with equipment for assessment and practice. The lab is equipped with hot and cold running water and has adequate storage spaces in the lab. The number of students to be enrolled can be easily accommodated.</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>The administrative assistant will be employed following Board approval of the program. A space has been identified just outside the director's office for this staff member.</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 current facilities housing the nursing program meet all Board requirements. Dr. Dune is participating in the planning for the nursing area in the new building. Director, faculty, and staff will be located together in the new building to facilitate their collaborative work. Security measures are in place to maintain privacy of documents. Classrooms, labs, and conference rooms allow room for comfort during the learning process and during meetings. Adequate restrooms and 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>Students will have online access to multiple databases. A library is available with reference staff to assist students with written projects. An orientation for new students is provided at regular intervals. The library has a selection of current nursing and health texts and references for sciences.</p>	<p>Criterion met.</p>

DRAFT LETTER

July 21, 2014

Linda Dune, PhD, RN, CNL, Director  
Baccalaureate Degree Nursing Education Program  
South University  
7700 W. Parmer Lane  
Austin, Texas 78729

Dear Dr. Dune:

At the July 17-18, 2014 meeting, members of the Texas Board of Nursing discussed the South University Proposal to Establish a New Baccalaureate Degree Nursing Education Program in Austin, Texas based upon the proposal and the June 3, 2014 survey visit. The members of the Board wish to thank you and ----- 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 South University to establish a new Baccalaureate Degree Nursing Education Program in Austin, Texas, and impose the conditions and 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) 305-6814 or [janice.hooper@bon.texas.gov](mailto:janice.hooper@bon.texas.gov).

Sincerely,

Katherine Thomas, MN, RN, FAAN  
Executive Director

copy: Southern Association of Colleges and Schools  
Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education  
John T. South, III, Chancellor, South University  
Shelby Frutchey, South University-Austin, Campus President

**BEFORE THE TEXAS BOARD OF NURSING**

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In the Matter of  
South 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 South 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 South University in Austin, Texas, and other interested parties, if any, the Board hereby grants INITIAL APPROVAL of the South University Baccalaureate Degree Nursing Education Program in Austin, Texas, and imposes the following conditions/requirements:

1. The program shall not admit more than one cohort of twenty-four (24) students in the first year and one 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