



Texas Board Approves BSN, 8/4/09

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News Brief - 8/4/09

Texas Board of Nursing Approves New Competency-Based B.S. in Nursing from Western Governors University

B.S. in Nursing Leading to R.N. Licensure Program Set to Begin in October

Salt Lake City, Utah — As it marked its 100-year anniversary at Austin's historic Driskill Hotel, the Texas Board of Nursing made history again on July 23, approving an innovative new nursing education program offered by Western Governors University, www.wgu.edu. The program, WGU's B.S. in Nursing (Prelicensure), is the first national, accredited, online competency-based bachelor's degree program aimed at preparing students for initial licensure as registered nurses. The Texas program, which will be based in hospitals in Dallas and Houston, is slated to begin in October.

Despite a nationwide shortage of registered nurses, more than 50,000 applicants were turned away from nursing schools last year. WGU has joined with state workforce agencies as well as healthcare institutions to address this shortage by developing an accredited, online, competency-based bachelor's degree program for students who wish to pursue a career in nursing. The program combines WGU's competency-based academic model with intensive clinical simulations and immersive clinical practice at partner hospitals, supervised by onsite clinical coaches serving as WGU adjunct faculty.

In addition to the Texas Workforce and Labor Development Agency, WGU has partnered with The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, the U.S. Department of Labor, the California Nurse Education Initiative Workforce and Labor Development Agency, Hospital Corporation of America (HCA), Kaiser Permanente, Tenet Healthcare, Universal Health Services, Cedars Sinai Medical Center, and Catholic Healthcare West. For more information regarding this program, go to www.wgu.edu/rn.

"This new nursing education program shows what can be achieved when healthcare providers, educators, and state government work together to address a critical shortage in education, and ultimately, in our workforce," said Debbie Moeller, Chief Nursing Officer for Lake Pointe Medical Center in Rowlett, Texas, one of the program's partner hospitals. "We expect that this new degree program will not only make nursing education more accessible to Texans who are interested in the field, but will also produce nurses who are prepared to deliver high quality patient care."

"Prospective nurses will now have access to a high quality degree program that will enable them to earn a B.S. and prepare for their RN license flexibly and affordably," said WGU President Robert Mendenhall. "The B.S. in Nursing leading to initial licensure program complements WGU's other bachelor's and master's degree nursing programs for already-licensed RNs and supports our mission to provide educational opportunities and degree programs to meet the needs of underserved populations and employers with critical workforce needs."