

Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi

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Texas Woman's University and Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi to Offer Cooperative Ph.D. Program in Nursing Doctorate in Nursing Program Will Offer Classes Beginning Fall 2009

CORPUS CHRISTI, Texas –Texas Woman's University and Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi have received approval from the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) to offer a cooperative Ph.D. in nursing beginning in fall 2009.

This Cooperative Ph.D. will make a doctoral nursing science program available to nurses in South Texas and will offer a blend of online, televideo and face-to-face classes. Students will be taught by Texas Woman's University doctoral faculty.

According to Texas Board of Nursing data, less than one percent of the nurses in Texas hold a doctoral degree while 6.3 percent have earned a master's degree in nursing. During the period 2004-2006 almost 56 percent of the qualified applicants to nursing programs in Texas were denied admission because of insufficient faculty resources. The faculty vacancy rate for the Texas Coastal Bend nursing schools is currently 20 percent.

Dr. Mary Jane Hamilton, dean of the College of Nursing and Health Sciences at Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi, said the new doctoral program will help address the shortage of nurse educators. The nursing programs in the Coastal Bend and throughout Texas, she pointed out, must implement a "grow-your-own" strategy to build a source of qualified educators in an atmosphere of intense marketplace competition.

"The ability to prepare new nurses is directly related to our ability to supply trained professionals to teach nursing programs," said Hamilton. "The national shortage of nurses is intricately linked to a lack of nursing faculty and training facilities. This new

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program will help meet this demand for nurse educators which will help alleviate the nursing shortage here and throughout the nation.”

Since he became Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi President/CEO in January 2005, Dr. Flavius Killebrew has consistently championed the creation of new programs to meet the needs of both prospective students and the South Texas community. In addition to supplying teaching professionals, the new doctoral program will help meet the demand for better-educated nurses and administrators in the private sector.

“A doctoral degree is quickly becoming essential for nurse executives of healthcare organizations across the entire country,” said Killebrew. “This program will reduce the necessity for full-time administrators to travel to complete their doctoral education and will provide students with flexible options that will allow them to retain their jobs and complete their education with the support of local faculty.”

Dr. Pat Holden-Huchton, dean of the TWU College of Nursing, emphasized that limited opportunities for doctoral programs have hindered the capacity of nursing programs in South Texas to expand their undergraduate and graduate programs. The partnership makes it possible for master’s-prepared faculty teaching at South Texas institutions to increase the capacity to deliver additional undergraduate nursing programs.

“This is truly a cooperative venture in sharing faculty knowledge, resources and expertise from both universities,” said Holden-Huchton. “The true beneficiaries of this partnership are nurses in South Texas who wish to pursue their doctorate, because now they have a convenient option to do so.”

Although students in South Texas will be participating through Texas A&M-Corpus Christi, the degree will be conferred by TWU. Current doctoral faculty and advisors will mentor with faculty at Texas A&M-Corpus Christi who will assume teaching roles in the Ph.D. program after gaining TWU Graduate Faculty status.

With more than 900 graduate and undergraduate students, the College of Nursing and Health Sciences is the fastest-growing College at Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi. For more information on the Cooperative Ph.D. in Nursing Program, go to www.twu.edu/nursing/phd.asp.