

The California Board of Registered Nursing Approves Affiliations for New Nursing Program

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Program Combines Online Education with On-site Clinical Training at Various San Diego Sharp HealthCare Locations

SAN DIEGO, July 31 /PRNewswire/ -- Acknowledging the need for more nurses nationwide, The California Board of Registered Nursing has approved a new affiliation among Southwestern College, San Diego State University and The University of Oklahoma Health Sciences Center (OUHSC) College of Nursing in order to provide clinical experiences in San Diego County for students enrolled in the OUHSC Online Accelerated Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) program. The new Accelerated Second Degree BSN Program is designed to help ease the nursing shortage by providing students with greater program access, flexibility and by graduating new nurses.

This innovative program blends tradition and technology, offering leading-edge online education and traditional on-site clinical education. Individuals in San Diego who currently have a bachelor's degree in a non-nursing major may qualify to earn a BSN from the University of Oklahoma College of Nursing (OU) in just 14 months. The theory portion of the program is taught completely online by the distinguished faculty of OU, and the clinical education component is taught exclusively at Sharp HealthCare facilities by faculty appointed there.

The nationwide nursing shortage is reaching alarming scope with approximately 1,000,000 unfilled nursing positions projected by 2020(1). According to the American Association of Colleges of Nursing (AACN), nursing schools must increase the number of graduates by 90 percent in order to combat the nursing shortage, yet in 2005 nursing schools denied over 41,000 applicants due to lack of capacity and lack of faculty. Recognizing that the number of applicants far exceeds the number of available slots in California(2), this newly approved Accelerated Second Degree BSN degree program reduces faculty and capacity constraints by connecting nursing students in California with award-winning faculty in Oklahoma and potentially other states, thus opening the door to more students.

The University of Oklahoma College of Nursing is known for academic excellence and was named a 2006 Center of Excellence in Nursing Education(TM) by the National League for Nursing.

The OU College of Nursing is committed to tackling the nursing shortage through innovative learning options, notes Dean Carole Kenner. "Educational excellence is our mission. We are creating the next generation of healthcare leaders, and the country needs them sooner rather than later. We are thrilled to be able to work with Sharp to bring more caring, committed individuals into the nursing profession."

Consistently ranked as the number one integrated health care system in Southern California by Modern Healthcare, the award-winning Sharp system has generously opened its doors to providing this educational opportunity to the community.

According to Jennifer Jacoby, Chief Nursing Officer, Sharp Memorial Hospital, "Sharp is proud to be associated with the prestigious University of Oklahoma College of Nursing. Their leadership combined with appointed expert, adjunct clinical faculty from the San Diego area will provide students with a first-rate educational experience."

The curriculum is comprehensive, encompassing more than 600 hours of online course work and almost 900 hours of hands-on clinical training at Sharp facilities in San Diego. Theory courses

taught by the University of Oklahoma College of Nursing faculty via interactive classes online will include threaded discussions, real-time Web casts, regular proctored examinations, projects and assignments. Students will have the flexibility of taking the online courses during day or evening hours. Hands-on clinical training will be taught by adjunct University of Oklahoma College of Nursing Program faculty assigned to work directly with students at several of Sharp HealthCare facilities.

Graduates of the program will earn a Bachelor of Science in Nursing degree through a 14-month curriculum, provided they already hold a bachelor's degree in another field. According to AACN, hospitals prefer nurses with a bachelor's degree because facilities with more educated nurses experience lower patient mortality rates, fewer medical errors and increased job satisfaction.

Interest in the program has been high; OU has already received numerous inquiries via Sharp HealthCare personnel. Prospective students are encouraged to call 888.MY.OUBSN for more information. The first class is full and set to begin in August. Applications are due October 1, 2007, for classes that begin January 2008.

For more information about The University of Oklahoma College of Nursing Program, contact 888.MY.OUBSN or visit <http://www.ounursing.com>.

- (1) U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, HRSA, April 2006.
- (2) "Ensuring an Adequate Health Workforce: Improving State Nursing Programs" by Elizabeth Hill, Legislative Analyst; May 2007.
http://www.lao.ca.gov/2007/nursing/nursing_052907.pdf

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