

From: [Sunset Advisory Commission](#)
To: [Cecelia Hartley](#)
Subject: FW: Public Input Form for Agencies Under Review (Public/After Publication)
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From: sundrupal@capitol.local [<mailto:sundrupal@capitol.local>]
Sent: Tuesday, November 15, 2016 10:53 AM
To: Sunset Advisory Commission
Subject: Public Input Form for Agencies Under Review (Public/After Publication)

Agency: TEXAS BOARD NURSING BON

First Name: Jennifer

Last Name: Gentry

Title: Chief Nursing Officer

Organization you are affiliated with: Excelsior College

Email:

City: Corpus Christi

State: Texas

Your Comments About the Staff Report, Including Recommendations Supported or
Opposed:

Testimony to the Sunset Commission regarding the Texas Board of Nursing

Jennifer Gentry, MS, RN, NEA- BC
Chief Nursing Officer
Christus Spohn Hospitals- Corpus Christi, Shoreline & Memorial Corpus Christi, TX

As an LVN, I knew from the start that I would go back to school to become an RN. I had heard of Excelsior College from co-workers and felt that it would be a great path for me. When I actually researched the program, I immediately knew that Excelsior College was the right school for me. I have always been an independent learner and the idea of attending a traditional nursing program filled me with dread over the time lost to a classroom pace that would match that of the average student. I also struggled to find the "right time" to go back to school. With a full time job and two young children at home it was going to take me multiple years as a part time student to complete a traditional nursing program. In Excelsior College I found a pace of learning that matched my abilities, a knowledgeable and accessible faculty to help me with any concepts I found challenging and the ability to complete my coursework when most convenient for my family, which was often late at night.

Excelsior College's competency based program was the right choice for me.

I had five years experience in the acute care setting as an LVN that provided me with the opportunity to develop strong clinical skills. The program allowed me to focus on the knowledge I lacked rather than go through the motions attending classes and clinicals for skills I had already developed.

Looking back, it is amazing to me to see the impact the Excelsior college nursing program had on my life. After successfully completing my associate degree I continued to practice in the acute care setting and quickly knew that nursing leadership was my passion and calling. In order to achieve this goal I would need to go back to school

again. This time I knew exactly where I wanted to go. Without hesitation I enrolled in the Excelsior College BS and MS in nursing programs. Again, I was able to complete the course work in my own time with minimal impact on my family. The programs prepared me very well for the realities of the workplace. The program was so relevant to the position that I held at the time that I was often seen as a resource within my nursing leadership team despite the few years of leadership experience I had to date. This allowed me to advance my career exponentially. I was the nurse Manager of a Cardiac department when I finished my Baccalaureate degree. Within the year I was promoted to Director of Nursing Operations and held this position while I completed the Master's program. Upon completion of this degree I was promoted to Chief Nursing Officer and have since taken two additional promotions in my healthcare system.

As a Chief Nursing Officer it is my responsibility to ensure that we are hiring competent nurses. I have found Excelsior graduates to be highly competent and uniformly successful in completing orientation to the acute care setting. My healthcare system is in an area that is very difficult to recruit to and the nursing shortage is very real to us. Excelsior College is an incredible resource to the nursing workforce. Thousands of nursing graduates would not have been able to transition into the profession without the Excelsior College School of Nursing. We know that lack of access to schools of nursing is one of the major contributors to our nursing shortage. With that in mind the profession should embrace and support Excelsior graduates. As an Excelsior graduate I am very well aware of the rigor of the Clinical Performance in Nursing Examination (CPNE). I have no doubt that a graduate of Excelsior College is going to be a valued addition to my healthcare facilities.

In an effort to further support the profession of nursing, provide access to nursing programs and develop my own nursing staff, I partnered with Excelsior College to set up a test site for the CPNE. Not only has this partnership improved access, it has positively impacted my leadership team. The nurse leaders that are Clinical Evaluators for Excelsior College have brought their skills and methodology back to the facility and driven process improvement.

Excelsior College has improved my personal and professional life. I would not be where I am today without them. The state of Texas benefits from the Excelsior College School of Nursing. The didactic portion of the program ensures that their graduates have the knowledge and leadership required to be a Registered Nurse and the CPNE ensures that only those with proven clinical skills are able to advance to graduation to sit for their boards. This is more than I can say for many traditional programs. It does not matter how many hours of clinical education a student receives if the school of nursing does not validate the skills learned. The state of Texas will be doing a disservice to the residents of Texas if Excelsior graduates who pass the NCLEX are not recognized for licensure by the Board of Nursing.

Any Alternative or New Recommendations on This Agency: none

My Comment Will Be Made Public: I agree