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Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center
Moves Forward with Plans for a Freestanding School of Nursing in El Paso

The Texas Tech University System Board of Regents recently approved the initiation of the process to establish an autonomous, fully accredited Texas Tech School of Nursing in El Paso.

Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center (TTUHSC) President Tedd L. Mitchell, M.D., brought the item to the board, stressing the value of expanding the satellite nursing programs now residing on the El Paso campus.

“The country’s nursing shortage is at a critical level, and we must reverse the numbers,” Mitchell said. “This will provide a great opportunity for the El Paso community to increase the nursing workforce while increasing the number of culturally-competent nurses trained to work effectively with other health care professionals.”

In 2009, Texas was short an estimated 20,000 nurses. As the state’s rapidly growing population ages, and the need for care increases, there is a greater need for nurses.

With a population of more than 700,000, El Paso is the fourth most populous city in Texas. When combined with Ciudad Juarez, Mexico, the city’s population increases to about 2.2 million. This region is a federally designated as a medically underserved area.

TTUHSC is well positioned to establish a freestanding Texas Tech School of Nursing in El Paso. In 2008, university administrators took the first step by implementing an accelerated second degree BSN program. A regional dean was recruited along with necessary faculty to support this inaugural program.

“Expanding the Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center campus in El Paso has been part of our vision for quite some time,” said Texas Tech University System Office of Communications and Marketing

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Chancellor Kent Hance. “With the challenges facing the nursing and health care industry, this newly proposed school will greatly improve the clinical and educational opportunities offered to students. It is important that we accommodate the continued growth at the Texas Tech School of Nursing in El Paso to meet the needs of this underserved area, the region and state.”

In August 2009, nursing programs were expanded to include a traditional BSN program, which now has approval from the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board to increase enrollment to 40 students. It is anticipated that the Texas Tech School of Nursing in El Paso will have an enrollment of 500 students by 2015.