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Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center School of Nursing
Re-Awarded Scholarships through the RWJF New Careers in Nursing Program

Scholarships funded through the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and American Association of Colleges of Nursing

Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center (TTUHSC) School of Nursing announced today that for the third year in a row, it has received funding to award scholarships from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF) and the American Association of Colleges of Nursing (AACN) through the RWJF New Careers in Nursing Scholarship Program (NCIN). Scholarships provided through this competitive program will be given to students traditionally underrepresented in the field of nursing and strives to prepare culturally competent leaders in the TTUHSC School of Nursing’s accelerated baccalaureate nursing program. NCIN was launched in 2008 to address the national nursing shortage and fuel the pipeline of diverse nurse faculty.

“Through the NCIN program, we are challenging the nation’s nursing schools to be innovative and resourceful in how they grow their nursing programs, diversify student populations and contribute to the nursing leadership of tomorrow,” said Denise A. Davis, Dr. P.H, RWJF program officer for NCIN. “We are very pleased to support this unique approach, particularly at a time when growing numbers of Americans are gaining insurance and entering our health care system.”

At TTUHSC School of Nursing, 10 scholarships in the amount of $10,000 each will be awarded to students entering the school’s accelerated Second Degree BSN program during the 2010-2011 academic year. To date, the NCIN program has supported 30 students in two years, and continues to develop culturally competent health professionals and future leaders of the profession.

“Our school is thrilled to receive this grant for the third year in a row, said Interim School of Nursing Dean Chandice Covington, Ph.D., R.N., Florence Thelma Hall Endowed Chair for Nursing Excellence in Women’s Health. “The scholarships will enable our Second Degree BSN students to focus on their education without the worries of large student loans.”

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The TTUHSC School of Nursing offers a second degree web-based accelerated baccalaureate nursing degree program for students with a previous college degree. This twelve-month program has preceptor and nurse educator oversight in the student's own community in Lubbock, Austin/Hill Country, Abilene, Permian Basin or El Paso.

TTUHSC School of Nursing will award the NCIN scholarships to second degree students from disadvantaged populations including first generation college students and individuals. For more information about how to apply, e-mail Tonia Borrego, senior administrative assistant, at tonia.borrego@ttuhsc.edu.

The NCIN program was created through RWJF and AACN to enable schools of nursing to expand student capacity in accelerated baccalaureate and master’s programs, and build a more diverse workforce ready to serve the needs of a changing patient population. Schools receiving grants through NCIN provide scholarships directly to students from groups underrepresented in nursing or from disadvantaged backgrounds. In its second year, 58 percent of scholarships went to students from diverse racial and ethnic groups and 37 percent went to male nursing students. Men currently account for only 6.6 percent of the national nursing population.

In the 2010 - 2011 academic year, 397 students in accelerated baccalaureate programs and 114 students in accelerated master’s programs will receive scholarship funding. Schools besides TTUHSC receiving the NCIN scholarships include Johns Hopkins University, the University of Texas at El Paso and the University of California, Los Angeles.

NCIN provides scholars with the most efficient route to licensure as a registered nurse (RN) and creates opportunities for adults who have already completed a baccalaureate or graduate degree in a field other than nursing. These programs prepare students to pass the licensure examination required for all RNs in as little as 12-18 months and provide quicker routes to workforce eligibility than traditional programs.

By bringing more nurses into the profession at the baccalaureate and master’s degree levels, the NCIN program also helps to address the nation’s nurse faculty shortage. Data from the U.S. Health Resources and Services Administration show that nurses entering the profession via baccalaureate programs are four times more likely than other nurses to pursue a graduate degree in nursing. This trend is reflected in the NCIN scholars, as 95 percent of the students receiving funding in the first two years of the program indicate a desire to advance their education to the master’s and doctoral levels.

Finally, the RWJF New Careers in Nursing Scholarship Program is clearly having a positive effect on the nation’s nursing schools. Many programs that received awards have used the NCIN funding to help leverage additional resources to add new faculty, secure matching funding from state programs, develop mentoring and leadership development programs, strengthen outreach efforts, and establish new partnerships with community and practice leaders. These efforts will enable schools to sustain their program expansion while positioning them for growth.