

**Proposal to Establish A New Nursing Education Program  
Texas A&M University-Commerce in Commerce, Texas  
Family Nurse Practitioner Program**

**Summary of Request:**

Consider the Texas A&M University-Commerce (A&M-Commerce) Department of Nursing proposal to establish a new Master of Science in Nursing (MSN) Family Nurse Practitioner (FNP) Program in Commerce, Texas, and the report of the survey visit (See Attachment #1). The final revised proposal was provided electronically to members of the Texas Board of Nursing (Board). A notice of public hearing has been posted (See Attachment #2).

**Historical Perspective:**

- A&M-Commerce is one of eleven (11) higher education institutions and seven (7) agencies governed by the Texas A&M University System. A nine-member Board of Regents, appointed by the Governor of Texas for six-year rotating terms, meets quarterly to provide governing oversight to all A&M System components. Each institution has its own Chief Executive Officer (President) who reports to an A&M System Chancellor, selected by the Board of Regents to serve an undefined term.
- A&M-Commerce was founded in 1889 as East Texas Normal College, purchased by the State of Texas in 1917, and was renamed East Texas State University in 1962. The University became a component of the Texas A&M University System in 1996.
- A&M-Commerce offers more than one hundred (100) major areas of study at the undergraduate, masters, and doctoral levels.
- A baccalaureate degree nursing (BSN) program at A&M-Commerce was approved by the Board in October 2012, and the first cohort of BSN students graduated in 2014. The BSN program is accredited by the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (CCNE) through November 2019.
- In 2015, the 84<sup>th</sup> Texas Legislature approved \$54 million to construct a School of Nursing and Health Sciences building.
- Barbara Tucker, PhD, RN, FAANP, Professor and Chair/Director of the Nursing Department submitted a proposal for a MSN FNP Program at A&M-Commerce on June 22, 2016.
- The proposed Coordinator of the FNP Program is Dr. Debra Mahoney, PhD, APRN, FNP.
- Approval from the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) was received on May 18, 2016.
- A&M-Commerce is requesting approval for the new FNP program to begin in Spring 2017 with an initial cohort of ten (10) students and an annual spring admission of ten (10) students in years two (2) through five (5).
- A site visit was conducted on September 7, 2016, by Gayle Varnell, PhD, APRN, CPNP-PC to ensure readiness of the physical site (See Attachment #1).

## **Summary of Proposal:**

### Overview of the Proposal:

- A&M-Commerce proposes to establish a new MSN-FNP Program designed to prepare registered nurses to deliver primary health care through an advanced scope of practice to individuals of all ages.
- The proposed program will be offered in a full-time (6 semesters) and in a part-time (9 semesters) plan of study.
- The curriculum includes nine (9) credits in:
  - Advanced physical assessment,
  - Advanced pathophysiology, and
  - Advanced pharmacology.
- The program requirements include a total of 730 clinical practice hours.
- The proposal projects an initial cohort of ten (10) students and a projected enrollment of ten (10) students in the spring of years two (2) through five (5).

### Rationale and Need for the Program:

- The proposal discusses the need for the establishment of the FNP program as four (4) factors:
  - The demand for primary care will continue to increase as a result of an increase in the general and aging population.
  - The rural Northeast Texas in which this proposed program is located includes a majority of counties designated as Health Professional Shortage Areas (HPSA).
  - Letters of support from community leaders in the East Texas area indicate strong support for the proposed nursing education program.
  - There are no other MSN programs within a twenty-five (25) mile radius.

### Administration and Organization:

- The philosophy of the Department of Nursing reflects the mission and goals of A&M-Commerce. The University and the Department of Nursing strive to provide academic excellence and support students in achieving academic success by providing challenging, engaging, and rewarding educational experiences.
- The proposed FNP Program Coordinator is Debra Mahoney, PhD, APRN, FNP. Dr. Mahoney has over eighteen (18) years of clinical experience in East Texas as an FNP in primary care practice and twenty-seven (27) years of experience teaching at both the undergraduate and graduate level. She has taught in MSN-FNP programs at two (2) other institutions. She also is a frequent speaker at nurse practitioner conferences at both the state and national level.

### Availability of Faculty and Clinical Sites:

- There are five (5) faculty who have an active APRN license as an FNP. One (1) faculty member is a Certified Nurse Midwife (CNM), one (1) an Acute Care Adult Nurse Practitioner and one (1) a Neonatal Nurse Practitioner.
- The majority of faculty have minimal teaching experience at the graduate level. Three (3) faculty have vitas indicating graduate faculty teaching experience.
- The Department of Nursing plans to add one administrative assistant and four (4) new faculty positions over the first five (5) years.

- The A&M-Commerce FNP program will have no impact on the use of clinical resources in the acute care facilities or community health departments in the local area or Northeast Texas region. Students in the FNP program will seek clinical learning experiences in primary care offices and clinics where A&M-Commerce already has clinical affiliation agreements or, in consultation with the faculty, will initiate agreements in new offices and clinics.
- The program has secured commitments for clinical learning experiences from a variety of health care institutions in the East Texas area.

#### Financial Support and Resources:

- The Board of Regents of A&M-Commerce System approved the establishment of the MSN degree in Fall 2015. The University is committed to providing appropriate facilities, resources, and services to support a successful MSN-FNP program.
- A&M-Commerce receives state financial appropriations directly from the Texas Legislature.
- The annual budget for the nursing program is a component of the budget for the College of Education and Human Services (COEHS), and is sufficient to support its development, implementation, and evaluation, as well as its recruitment and retention of qualified faculty.

#### Students:

- The major source of students for the program will be graduates from the BSN program at A&M-Commerce, as well as baccalaureate-prepared nurses working in health care facilities in the area.
- Recruitment will occur through education information fairs held annually at local health care facilities, university website on-line advertising, and information provided at the Nursing Advisory Council semi-annual meetings.
- The focus is to recruit students who have ties to this rural Northeast Texas area and who will remain in the area after graduation.

#### Program of Study:

- The proposed Master of Science in Nursing program with Family Nurse Practitioner focus reflects the mission of the parent institution in that it will provide an educational experience for students to “discover and disseminate knowledge for leadership and service” (A&M-Commerce mission statement). It also seeks to prepare students to meet the health care needs of rural Northeast Texas.
- The MSN philosophy builds on the BSN nursing program philosophy, advancing the concepts of critical thinking, life-long learning, and professionalism.
- The faculty will use a hybrid approach to didactic instruction, drawing on the strengths of online learning combined with interactive classroom sessions. Emphasis will be placed on student immersion in learning, both in the classroom, online, and situational learning.

#### Total Evaluation Plan:

- The program’s Total Evaluation Plan (TEP) is well-developed and provides measurable indicators of achievement. It is a systematic collection, review, and analysis of various aspects of the education program with the focus on improving student learning, development, and education success.
- The TEP includes the criteria to be evaluated, methodologies, frequency, indicators of effectiveness (benchmarks), and the individual(s) responsible. The TEP is designed to enable the faculty to evaluate the program according to four (4) standards as required by

the CCNE for program accreditation: mission and governance, institutional commitment and resources, curriculum and teaching-learning practices, and assessment and achievement of program.

**Comments from Survey Visit:**

Board Staff met with the chair/director, the proposed coordinator of the program, the dean of the COEHS, and support staff, as well as toured the facilities. During the visit, Board Staff also had the opportunity to observe faculty and students in the simulation lab.

Pros:

- The university has committed extensive resources to the establishment of the new program.
- The campus offers learners multiple resources appropriate to a well-established university.
- Multiple, comprehensive, and diverse clinical learning experiences have been secured.
- The chair/director and proposed coordinator are qualified and experienced in graduate professional nursing education.

Cons:

- A number of the faculty have minimal teaching experience at the graduate level.

**Staff Recommendation:**

Move to grant initial approval to Texas A&M University to establish a new Master of Science in Nursing Family Nurse Practitioner Program in Commerce Texas, and impose the conditions/requirements in the attached Board Order (See Attachment #3).

**TEXAS BOARD OF NURSING  
SURVEY VISIT PROGRAM REPORT  
Master of Science in Nursing Family Nurse Practitioner Program  
Texas A&M University-Commerce in Commerce, Texas**

**NAME OF NURSING PROGRAM:** Texas A&M University-Commerce (A&M-Commerce)  
Master of Science in Nursing Family Nurse Practitioner  
Program in Commerce, Texas

**PROPOSED DIRECTOR:** Debra Mahoney, PhD, APRN, FNP, Coordinator

**REASON FOR SURVEY:** New Proposal  
**DATE:** September 07, 2016

**SURVEY VISITOR:** Gayle P. Varnell, PhD, APRN, CPNP-PC

**Met with:** Barbara Tucker , PhD, RN, FAAOP, Chair/Director  
Debbie Mahoney, PhD, APRN, FNP, Coordinator  
Dr. Timothy Letzring , COEHS Dean  
Angie Hill, Administrative Assistant

In this report the nursing program met standards and criteria unless otherwise indicated by narrative. Narrative in the Evidence column documents findings of pertinent data, outstanding performance, or deficiencies. Narrative in the Comments column includes recommendations or requirements to be met based on analysis of the survey visit.

<b>§219.11 FACILITIES, RESOURCES AND SERVICES</b>	<b>EVIDENCE</b>	<b>COMMENTS</b>
Provide a description of plans to recruit and hire support staff for operation of the proposed nursing program, including the need for support staff in the areas specified in Rule 219.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Department of Nursing plans to add one administrative assistant and four (4) new faculty positions over the first five (5) years.</li> </ul>	Criteria Met
Provide a description of existing and proposed physical facilities, including: office space for the nursing program director and nursing faculty members, space for clerical staff; space for maintaining and storing records, files and equipment; and number, size and types of classrooms, laboratories, and conference rooms designated for use by the nursing program. (Note: Floor plans, photographs, drawings, etc. may be submitted as supplemental evidence.) *The Texas BON will only review this area specifically for the purpose of determining that the existing and proposed physical facilities meet the	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There is a 2400 square foot space which includes:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➢ The Director's private office with a conference area;</li> <li>➢ Administrative assistant's office - three (3) locking file cabinets, a large desk, color printer, copy/fax machine, and shredder;</li> <li>➢ Five (5) fully furnished private faculty offices;</li> <li>➢ Two (2) bathrooms; and a</li> <li>➢ Student lounge/conference area.</li> <li>➢ There is a 1040 square foot addition which includes:</li> <li>➢ Skills lab with five (5) medical beds, two regular sinks and one</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	Criteria Met

§219.11 FACILITIES, RESOURCES AND SERVICES	EVIDENCE	COMMENTS
requirements of Rule 219.	<p>surgical sink, and a large storage closet.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There is also a 7000 square foot addition which includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ A simulation hospital with four (4) hospital rooms;</li> <li>➤ A large physical assessment laboratory with five (5) exam tables;</li> <li>➤ An observation/debriefing room that can also be used as a classroom and will accommodate fifty (50) students;</li> <li>➤ Two (2) faculty offices and the Sim Lab Coordinator's offices;</li> <li>➤ Two (2) restrooms; and a</li> <li>➤ Large storage room.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	
Provide the time line for start-up and completion of new construction/remodeling projects, and evidence that the institution will provide funds for the required new construction or remodeling.	The 2015 legislature approved a \$54 million Nursing and Health Sciences building. The building will quadruple the skills lab space, double the assessment lab space, increase the simulation hospital to six (6) hospital rooms, and provide for twenty (20) nursing faculty offices, two (2) program coordinator offices, and an area for the department Chair/Director. There will be four (4) classrooms that seat forty (40) and one (1) classroom that will seat eighty (80) as well as five (5) conference rooms for small classes. Estimated completion date is January 2019.	Criteria Met
<p>Provide a description of existing and proposed educational resources, including inventory of existing and proposed nursing skills laboratory equipment purchases, computer laboratory equipment, and inventory of teaching/learning aids for the nursing program, such as audiovisual hardware and software.</p> <p>*The Texas BON will only review this area specifically for the purpose of determining that adequate resources are available to ensure equal access for all nursing students to meet program/course outcomes and the requirements of Rule 219.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Supplies necessary for learning experiences in a BSN program have been purchased and are available for MSN learning needs.</li> <li>• The Nursing Department has a SimMan 3G, SimMom, SimJr, two Gaumard Hals, two Gaumard infants, one SimBaby, two Nurse Annes with SimPads, two Patient Kellys, six IV arms, two torsos, two pelvises, and multiple low-fidelity teaching/learning simulators.</li> </ul>	Criteria Met

§219.11 FACILITIES, RESOURCES AND SERVICES	EVIDENCE	COMMENTS
<p>Provide an inventory of library holdings and projected purchases to support the proposed nursing program.</p> <p>* The Texas BON will only review this area specifically for the purpose of determining the current inventory of nursing volumes, nursing journals, other nursing holdings, and projected purchases of nursing holdings.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Texas A&amp;M University-Commerce Libraries collection has over a million items. This figure includes over 400,000 monographs, 300,000 serials volumes, 423,000 government documents, and over 500,000 microforms. Access to electronic resources includes over 200 databases, 40,000 journals, and 65,000 ebooks. A listing of the number of print and electronic titles according to the library of congress subject headings, numerous databases that support the BSN program, and a sampling of the print and electronic journal collection are available.</li> <li>• Texas A&amp;M University-Commerce has purchased CINAHL® Plus with Full Text, the world's most comprehensive nursing &amp; allied health research database, providing full text for more than 770 journals indexed. Of those, 462 are not found with full text in any version of Academic Search™, Health Source® or Nursing &amp; Allied Health Collection™. This authoritative file contains full text for many of the most used journals in the CINAHL index - with no embargo. The database also provides full text for more than 275 books/monographs. With full-text coverage dating back to 1937, CINAHL Plus with Full Text is the definitive research tool for all areas of nursing and allied health literature.</li> <li>• CINAHL Plus with Full Text also provides indexing for more than 4,500 journals from the fields of nursing and allied health. The database contains more than 2.7 million records dating back to 1981. Offering complete coverage of English-language nursing journals and publications from the National League for Nursing and the</li> </ul>	<p>Criteria Met</p>

§219.11 FACILITIES, RESOURCES AND SERVICES	EVIDENCE	COMMENTS
	<p>American Nurses' Association, CINAHL covers nursing, biomedicine, health sciences librarianship, alternative/complementary medicine, consumer health and 17 allied health disciplines. In addition, this database offers access to health care books, nursing dissertations, selected conference proceedings, standards of practice, educational software, audiovisuals and book chapters. Searchable cited references for more than 1,340 journals are also included.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Appropriations have allowed the Library to subscribe to The Cochrane Library, a collection of six databases that contain different types of high-quality, independent evidence to inform healthcare decision-making, and a seventh database that provides information about groups in The Cochrane Collaboration.</li> <li>• The library has a strong foundation to build upon to support the BSN degree. An evaluation of resources using Bowker's Book Analysis System (which electronically compares an existing collection to Resources for College Libraries, the premier core list for academic libraries, to recognize where strengths and weaknesses occur in a collection), shows that A&amp;M-Commerce currently has approximately one-half of the core titles for the courses in the MSN degree. Titles not in the collection may be obtained through the interlibrary loan program. The library will use the core title list for annual collection evaluation and purchasing</li> </ul>	
Provide evidence of adequate restrooms and lounges sufficient to meet Americans with Disabilities Act accessibility and compliance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The current set of buildings in which the Nursing Department is housed has four restrooms and a small lounge. The entrance,</li> </ul>	Criteria Met

<p><b>§219.11 FACILITIES, RESOURCES AND SERVICES</b></p>	<p><b>EVIDENCE</b></p>	<p><b>COMMENTS</b></p>
<p>requirements.</p>	<p>passageways, labs, restrooms, and lounge all meet ADA compliance requirements. The new School of Nursing and Health Science building will meet all code requirements.</p>	
<p>Provide a description of existing and proposed student support services, including developmental learning programs, learning assessment programs, and counseling programs and resources to promote retention of nursing students.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All of the student support services currently available to A&amp;M-Commerce students will be available for students in the proposed MSN program.</li> <li>• There are several resources available to promote admission, advising and retention of students.</li> <li>• The graduate student’s initial contact with the University is through the Nursing Department where the student’s potential for success can be evaluated.</li> <li>• Admitted students needing developmental, learning assessment, and counseling programs can be referred to the Student Access and Success Center.</li> <li>• The Counseling Center offers services to help students reach their academic and personal goals and maximize their potential for success. They provide academic skills assistance, assessment and screening, consultation and referral, crisis intervention, educational outreach, individual and group counseling, legal advising, a relaxation room, and biofeedback.</li> <li>• There are also financial aid and veteran’s services available.</li> <li>• The Nursing Department has a dedicated advising center located in and supported by the College of Education and Human Services (COEHS). This Mentor Center provides support for students through information, guidance, and specialized services as they progress towards their academic and career goals. Students with majors in the College receive advising, information about</li> </ul>	<p>Criteria Met</p>

§219.11 FACILITIES, RESOURCES AND SERVICES	EVIDENCE	COMMENTS
	<p>financial aid and scholarships, and degree evaluation. The Mentor Center is in frequent contact with the Nursing Department to assure accuracy and completeness in their services.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Student Health Services provides wellness and illness care to students on a sliding scale fee basis. Evening hours are available one or two days a week.</li> </ul>	

**Pros and Cons from the Survey Visit:**

Pros:

- Facilities, resources, and services are adequate to meet the needs of the proposed MSN-FNP program with plans for a state-of-the art nursing facility to be completed by January 2019.

Cons:

- None identified.

BOARD OF NURSING FOR THE STATE OF TEXAS  
333 Guadalupe Street, Suite 3-460  
Austin, Texas 78701-3942

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING  
for  
Consideration of a Proposal from Texas A&M University-Commerce  
Master of Science in Nursing Family Nurse Practitioner Program  
in Commerce, Texas

Date and Time: October 27, 2016 at 2:20 PM  
Place: Hobby Building  
333 Guadalupe Street  
Tower 2, Room 225  
Austin, Texas

The Board will hear testimony from individuals who wish to present information concerning the proposal. Written testimony will also be considered and should be received in the Board's office by October 21, 2016.

Address written testimony to:  
Katherine Thomas, MN, RN, FAAN, Executive Director  
Texas Board of Nursing  
333 Guadalupe Street, Suite 3-460  
Austin, Texas 78701-3942

DRAFT LETTER

October 27, 2016

Debra Mahoney, PhD, APRN, FNP, Coordinator  
Master of Science in Nursing Family Nurse Practitioner Program  
Texas A&M University-Commerce  
PO Box 3011  
Commerce, TX 75429

Dear Dr. Mahoney:

At the October 27-28, 2016 meeting, members of the Texas Board of Nursing discussed the Texas A&M University-Commerce Proposal to establish a new Master of Science in Nursing Family Nurse Practitioner Program in Commerce, Texas, and the report of the September 7, 2016 survey visit. The Board wishes to thank Dr. Tucker, Dr. Letzring, and you for being present to answer questions.

Based upon the discussion and review of documents, it was the decision of the Board to grant initial approval to Texas A&M University-Commerce to establish a new Master of Science in Nursing Family Nurse Practitioner Program in Commerce, Texas, and impose the conditions/requirements in the attached Board Order.

We wish you success with the program. If you have questions, or if we may be of assistance, please contact Board Staff at 512-621-5179.

Sincerely,

Katherine A. Thomas, MN, RN, FAAN  
Executive Director

Copy: Dr. Ray Keck, Interim President,  
Texas A&M University-Commerce  
Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board  
Southern Association of Colleges and Schools  
Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education

**BEFORE THE TEXAS BOARD OF NURSING**

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**ORDER OF THE BOARD**

In the Matter of  
Texas A&M University-Commerce  
Master of Science in Nursing Family Nurse Practitioner Program  
In Commerce, Texas

A public meeting of the Texas Board of Nursing, hereinafter referred to as the Board, was held on October 27, 2016, 333 Guadalupe, Tower II, Room 225, Austin, Texas, to consider the Texas A&M University-Commerce proposal to establish a new Master of Science in Nursing Family Nurse Practitioner Program In Commerce, Texas, based upon the review of the Proposal, pursuant to Section 301.157, Texas Occupations Code and 22 Tex. Admin. Code Chapter 215.

After review and due consideration of the filed materials, as well as the presentation by the representatives from Texas A&M University-Commerce in Commerce, Texas, and other interested parties, if any, the Board hereby grants INITIAL APPROVAL of the Texas A&M University-Commerce Master of Science in Nursing Family Nurse Practitioner Program In Commerce, Texas and imposes the following condition/requirement:

1. The program shall not admit more than one (1) cohort of ten (10) students annually.
2. The program shall develop a formal plan for mentoring graduate faculty.
3. The program shall actively recruit faculty that are FNPs with experience teaching at the graduate level.

Entered this 27th day of October, 2016

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Katherine A. Thomas, MN, RN, FAAN  
Executive Director on behalf of the  
Texas Board of Nursing