

YOUR LIFE
— *our purpose* —

TTUHSC takes the stress off veterans by ensuring all necessary documents are submitted to the Department of Veterans Affairs to certify student enrollments. Sarah Henly serves as TTUHSC's Veteran and Military Advisor and is a veteran herself. Our Veterans and Military Advising Office and Sarah's Dedication have produced phenomenal results for veterans interested in enrolling in TTUHSC but who may have found the experience to be too daunting.

The Veteran and Military Advising Office continues to be the primary point of contact and resource for veterans after they have enrolled and begin their degree program. TTUHSC hosts lunches each semester for our student veterans on all campuses. TTUHSC recognizes our student veterans all the way to the end. At commencement, graduating veterans receive military stoles with a red double T to recognize not only their recent accomplishment but service to our country as well.

One of TTUHSC's more innovative programs is the Accelerated Veteran to Bachelor of Science in Nursing (VBSN) track. VBSN is a nursing degree completed in **12 months** specifically designed for veterans with prior military medical training. This program allows veterans to receive competency based college credit and to earn their BSN in less time with less cost.

This program is unique in that TTUHSC faculty developed this curriculum with the Medical Education and Training Command (METC) located at the Joint Services Base in San Antonio, Texas. TTUHSC faculty collaborated with METC personnel to review the METC curriculum for medics. The medic curriculum was examined to determine which courses offered key elements similar to nursing courses. This program then created a competency based examination to award college credits by recognizing prior learning. Veterans have the opportunity to be given college credit for four courses (14 semester credit hours).

TTUHSC received support from the US Department of Health and Human Services Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) to develop and implement the VBSN program. HRSA's Nurse Education, Practice, Quality and Retention (NEPQR) -Veterans in Bachelor of Science in Nursing Program awarded \$1.04 million. TTUHSC also received \$200,000 from the Texas Workforce Commission. Both grants have been great resources and we recommend Congress continue to fund this program.

The VBSN has had phenomenal success. The current 2017 VBSN class has 12 students. Seven students graduated in December 2016 and all passed the nurse licensing examination. The incoming cohort for 2018 has 22 students. For 2019, TTUHSC has 45 prospects. TTUHSC anticipates increasing our numbers annually by 50 percent. TTUHSC offers the VBSN program in seven locations: Lubbock, Amarillo, Odessa, Abilene, Dallas, Austin, and San Antonio. As a result of VBSN's success, TTUHSC's School of Pharmacy and School of Health Professions are considering offering competency-based education as well.

TTUHSC would like to offer recommendations for the Subcommittee to consider to improve the quality of education for student veterans.

