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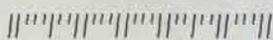


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Slumber School

CoARC-Accredited Polysomnography Program at Texas State University Opens in September



Texas State University-San Marcos respiratory care student Jamie Ferreras places EEG electrodes on fellow RC student Nate Rodrigues as part of their clinical training in polysomnography. This fall, Texas State will open an accredited Polysomnography Program. (photo courtesy Texas State University-San Marcos)

The numbers just don't add up. Sleep disorders affect an estimated 82 million Americans, 12 million of whom reportedly suffer from obstructive sleep apnea. Yet there are only 18,000 sleep labs and sleep centers nationwide performing requisite diagnostic tests and only 7,000 credentialed registered polysomnographic technologists (RPSGT) to perform them.

Obviously, missing from the equation are enough skilled professionals in sleep labs. Since respiratory therapists account for a significant number of the current pool of sleep professionals, the Committee on Accreditation for Respiratory Care (CoARC) in 2005 approved respiratory care schools to operate polysomnography accreditation programs.

One such school to offer the accreditation, Texas State University-San Marcos, will launch its Polysomnography Program (PSG) in the fall.

Gregg Marshall, PhD, RRT, chair of the

Department of Respiratory Care at Texas State, said once students complete the nine-month program, they'll immediately be able to sit for the Board for Registered Polysomnographic Technologists exam to earn their RPSGT credential.

Texas State's Respiratory Care Department, one of the largest in the country with 130 respiratory students, has been geared up to teach future RPSGTs since a two-bedroom sleep lab opened on campus two years ago. In the lab, PSG students will be trained and actually participate in patient diagnostics and titration, Marshall said.

Currently, Texas State is accepting applications to fill the 14 seats in the program.

The course work consists of 18 credits (six courses in the fall, six in the spring). CRTs or RRTs, who haven't earned their bachelor's, can complete the PSG program at the undergraduate level.

If students already have earned their undergraduate degree, they can use the credits to advance their education and receive a master's of science in Interdisciplinary Studies from Texas State. Marshall said the Interdisciplinary Studies program is very flexible. To obtain the remaining 21 graduate-level credits, students can choose master's courses in business, education, health care administration or clinical psychology.

"This is the only graduate-level PSG program in the country," Marshall said. "The need for credentialed, well-trained RPSGT professionals is profound."

What's more, Texas State's program extends to non-respiratory health care professionals. A PSG "bridge option" is available for health care workers who hold a "patient-focused" credential such as RN, LVN or EMT-P.

CoARC allows respiratory schools to tailor the polysomnography accreditation in various ways: a stand-alone certification program, a specialty track within the respiratory curriculum or a separate program. ■

For more information about the accredited Polysomnography Program at Texas State University-San Marcos, contact Gregg Marshall at (512) 245-8243 or visit the school's Web site at www.health.txstate.edu/RC.

Program directors interested in adding polysomnography to their curriculum, can find more information at the CoARC Web site at www.coarc.com.

CoARC-Accredited Polysomnography Programs

Alvin Community College, Alvin, Texas
Catawba Valley Community College, Hickory, N.C.
Coosa Valley Technical College, Rome, Ga.
Cuyahoga Community College, Cleveland
Darton College, Albany, Ga.
East Tennessee State University, Johnson City, Tenn.
Pitt Community College, Greenville, N.C.
Stony Brook University, Stony Brook, N.Y.
Tallahassee Community College, Tallahassee, Fla.
Temple College, Temple, Texas
Texas State University-San Marcos
University of Alabama-Birmingham
Youngstown State University, Youngstown, Ohio

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