

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA LOS ANGELES

NURSING

IN THIS ISSUE:

Educational pathways help meet community needs P.8

Stronger academic/practice bond lifts all parties P.24



A NEW UCLA NURSING PATHWAY

POST BSN — DNP PROGRAM

THIS NEW THREE-YEAR, POST BACHELOR OF SCIENCE IN NURSING TO DOCTOR OF NURSING PRACTICE (POST BSN-DNP) PROGRAM IS DESIGNED TO PREPARE REGISTERED NURSES TO BECOME EXPERTS AND LEADERS IN ADVANCED PRACTICE WHILE COMPLETING A DOCTORAL DEGREE IN NURSING.

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS: Earn your DNP in 3 years • Nurses are prepared for advanced clinical practice
• Four tracks available • Courses integrate evidence-based clinical principles & learning strategies • Opportunities to disseminate scholarly work

Learn more: nursing.UCLA.edu/bsn-dnp

UCLA School of Nursing

WELCOME

A Message from the Dean



Devastating wildfires have affected Los Angeles and the surrounding areas. Our hearts go out to all those impacted by the catastrophic wildfires. We salute the frontline firefighters who worked tirelessly to contain these fires and save lives. UCLA Nursing, as part of UCLA, demonstrated

care, compassion, and kindness to support those coping, recovering, and rebuilding. It is in times such as these that nurses' humanity and compassion shine through. Together, we stand in solidarity with our community and know that we will emerge from this disaster stronger than ever.

As we continue to navigate through this challenge, I am pleased to introduce you to the relaunch of our newly redesigned UCLA Nursing Magazine — a collection of stories showcasing how Bruin Nurses are shaping health and healthcare in communities near and far.

For more than 75 years, the UCLA School of Nursing has maintained a legacy of innovation, leadership, and excellence. It is those principles that continue to drive us forward, reaching for new heights in teaching, research, and service. Throughout this magazine, you will read stories of students, faculty, staff, and alumni who continue our legacy and embody our values of excellence and innovation, scientific inquiry, integrity and respect, teamwork, and compassion.

At UCLA Nursing, we continue to elevate how we teach — ensuring we are preparing tomorrow's nurse leaders with not just knowledge and expertise, but also compassion and empathy. Our holistic admissions process, the expansion of new programs and pathways to meet evolving needs of

our students and communities (read more in the article that starts on page 8), and the implementation of the AACN New Essentials means we're more accessible than ever and are providing high-quality, competency-based education to students from all walks of life.

Our research enterprise continues to expand, with total funded research exceeding \$25 million. From basic bench science to applied patient-centered studies and innovative solutions to worldwide problems, our nurse scientists — two of whom are featured beginning on page 28 — are working to improve health and wellness locally and globally as we strive to achieve health equity for all.

We also remain steadfast in the service mission of UCLA. Through our deep partnership with UCLA Health (more starting on page 24), our students and faculty are able to go beyond the walls of higher education to provide meaningful health education and services to communities across Los Angeles.

While we are experiencing rapid development of healthcare technologies such as AI, emerging new knowledge, and multifaceted challenges, I know that exactly within these challenges and opportunities, nurses find the strength to lead with passion, purpose, and joy. Together, our dedicated faculty, staff, students, and community partners will continue to work hand-in-hand and make a profound impact on the world — one patient, one community, and one student at a time.

Thank you for all you do in support of UCLA Nursing.

With Bruin Pride,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Lin Zhan', written in a cursive style.

Lin Zhan
Dean & Professor

UCLA NURSING

Editor-in-Chief — Aaron Hilf

Editor — Dan Gordon

Art Direction & Design — Rent Control Creative

Writers — Nancy Sokoler Steiner, Dan Gordon, Aaron Hilf

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Dean Lin Zhan.



↑ Nearly 60 first-year students in the UCLA Nursing Master of Science – Advanced Practice Registered Nurse program received their white coats at the 2024 APRN White Coat Ceremony.



↑ Cover illustration by Ping Zhu

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The UCLA School of Nursing acknowledges the Gabrielino/Tongva Peoples as the traditional caretakers of Tovaangar (the Los Angeles basin and So. Channel Islands).

As a land grant institution, we pay our respects to the Honuukvetam (Ancestors), Ahiihirom (Elders) and 'Eyoohiinkem (our relatives/relations) past, present and emerging.

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HAPPENINGS

Around the School of Nursing and UCLA



Nursing students give back to the community

Through a partnership with UCLA Health (more on p. 24), School of Nursing students have the opportunity to volunteer at various health fairs and community events across Los Angeles. Under supervision, students engage with attendees to provide health screenings and educational information.



Dr. Julio Frenk becomes UCLA's seventh chancellor

Dr. Julio Frenk, a leading global health researcher who has held positions in government and academia both in the U.S. and in Mexico, joined UCLA as its seventh chancellor January 1, 2025.

Frenk most recently served as president of the University of Miami, a private institution of more than 17,000 students. He previously served as dean of the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health and as Mexico's national health secretary.

"At this crucial moment for higher education, returning to the public sector to lead one of the top research universities in the world — including one of the 10 largest academic health systems — is an exciting opportunity and a great honor for me," Frenk said when his appointment was announced last summer. "I look forward to adding my lifelong commitment to public service in education and healthcare to the vibrant, diverse, and cosmopolitan community that is Los Angeles."

During his tenure at the University of Miami, where he became president in August 2015, Frenk achieved a dramatic turnaround of the university's academic health system, drawing on the strengths of its medical school, and made strategic investments in educational innovation and interdisciplinary research.

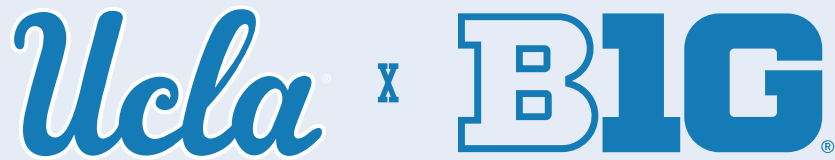
In his nearly seven years as dean of the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health, Frenk was known for his interdisciplinary approach, his efforts toward educational reform and his strong fundraising abilities — the school's \$350 million naming gift was the largest in Harvard's history at the time.

A native of Mexico, Frenk served from 2000 to 2006 as Mexico's secretary of health, during which he worked to reform the nation's health system and launched Seguro Popular, an ambitious program to provide universal comprehensive health insurance. His efforts helped expand access to healthcare for more than 55 million uninsured people.

Before that, he was the founding director of Mexico's National Institute of Public Health, one of the leading institutions of health education and research in the developing world. Frenk's own scholarship focuses on the functioning of health systems and the social and economic factors that determine why some people get sick. His research also examines the public policy implications of health transitions, the education of health professionals, and global health governance.

Frenk received his medical degree from the National University of Mexico in 1979, and attended the University of Michigan, where he earned a master's in public health in 1981, a master's in sociology in 1982, and a joint doctorate in medical care organization and sociology in 1983.

"I am looking forward to the opportunities ahead," Frenk said. "Working together with the amazing students, faculty, staff, and alumni, I am confident we will continue UCLA's upward trajectory."



UCLA officially joins the Big Ten Conference

From the beaches of California to the Eastern Shore, new rivalries, traditions and opportunities await Bruin student-athletes, with UCLA officially entering the Big Ten Conference.

The university, along with former Pac-12 Conference rivals USC, Oregon and Washington, has joined the nation's oldest NCAA Division I athletic conference as part of the biggest coast-to-coast conference realignment in college sports.

When UCLA's impending move was announced two years ago amid seismic shifts in college athletics, Martin Jarmond, the Alice and Nahum Lainer Family Director of Athletics, said membership in the conference would bring new competitive opportunities and a broader national media platform for UCLA student-athletes to showcase their talents, along with enhanced resources to support the long-term health of the campus's athletics.

The now-18-team Big Ten Conference features Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Maryland, Michigan, Michigan State, Minnesota, Nebraska, Northwestern, Ohio State, Oregon, Penn State, Purdue, Rutgers, USC, Washington, Wisconsin and, of course, the Bruins.



Class of 2024 walks across the Commencement stage

More than 200 graduating students, representing nearly every level of the nursing profession, received their diplomas at the UCLA School of Nursing's 2024 Commencement Ceremony at historic Royce Hall in June.

The School of Nursing was honored to welcome Johnese Spisso (left), a renowned healthcare leader and president of UCLA Health as well as the CEO of the UCLA Health System, to deliver the key-note address to attendees. Spisso spoke to graduates about her own journey to nursing and the leadership role nurses should play to improve health for patients and communities.



Quiet Leadership

UCLA Nursing alum Luigi Estrera ensures success behind the scenes.

By Nancy Sokoler Steiner
Photo Chris Flynn

As director of perioperative services at Children’s Hospital Los Angeles, Dr. Luigi Estrera (DNP ’24) likens the teams he directs to film or television production crews. Their extensive efforts behind the scenes are essential to the success of the “stars” of surgery — the surgical team and the patient. Estrera oversees all phases of the surgical continuum, including the preoperative clinical area, OR, and post-anesthesia care unit, as well as support services such as

materials management, sterile processing, administration, and scheduling.

“From a procedure as simple as repairing a broken finger to one as complex as transplanting an organ, anytime you make a patient’s life better surgically, it’s just so satisfying,” he says. “And that feeling is magnified when it comes to children because they’re such a vulnerable population.”

Estrera originally planned to follow several family members into a career

in the military. He joined the U.S. Navy and served as a mechanic with the Construction Battalion, also known as the SeaBees. However, his family also includes healthcare professionals, and he decided to get his nursing degree.

After earning his RN, Estrera became a pharmaceutical sales representative for a product used by urologists. The exposure to urologic surgery helped steer him back into the clinical arena. He switched to working as an orthopedic surgical nurse, which resonated with the mechanics he’d practiced in the Navy. “We handled a lot of screws and did a lot of drilling to reduce and fix fractures and broken bones,” Estrera says. “I really enjoyed the environment because how often do you get to play with tools and save a person’s limb?”

Estrera loved the work but wanted to have a bigger impact, so he went on to earn a Master of Business Administration from UC Irvine and a Master of Health Administration from USC. During that time, he held positions at Mount Sinai Health System in New York City and the VA Hospital in Los Angeles.

Estrera assumed his position at Children’s Hospital Los Angeles in 2022, the same year he enrolled in the Doctor of Nursing Practice program at the UCLA School of Nursing. As part of his training, Estrera had the opportunity to shadow Dr. K. David Bailey, chief nursing officer at UCLA Santa Monica Medical Center.

“For two years, I observed how he ran his team, how he made decisions, and how he interacted with other professions

“Anytime you make a patient’s life better surgically, it’s just so satisfying.”

throughout the hospital,” he says. “It gave me a different lens. I’m so grateful that the university and the hospital allowed me to have this experience.” Estrera also appreciated collaborating with and observing Dr. Karen Grimley, UCLA Health chief nursing executive.

Now Estrera wants to become a mentor like the ones who guided him. “One of the reasons I did my doctorate in nursing is I want to give back to the profession, specifically to future nurse leaders,” he says. “I have a responsibility to pass on what I’ve learned to the next generation.” ●

VITALS

Education
UCLA School of Nursing:
DNP ’24

USC:
MHA ’21

UC Irvine:
MBA ’18

Far Eastern University:
BSN ’08

Credentials
RN, CNOR,
NEA-BC

Current Position
Children’s Hospital Los Angeles:
Director, Perioperative Services





PROFILE

Ensuring Excellence

Alum Jessica Phillips supports UCLA Health nurses in delivering high-level, evidence-based patient care.

By Nancy Sokoler Steiner
Photo Chris Flynn

As executive director of nursing practice, education and research for UCLA Health's Center for Nursing Excellence, Dr. Jessica Phillips (MSN '08, PhD '23) ensures that there are structures and processes in place for lifelong learning to cultivate excellence in nursing practice and produce the best outcomes for patients. This includes evidence-based policies, educational infrastructure that

guides the delivery of clinical care, and a research infrastructure that supports clinical nurses as they pursue and disseminate research. Phillips also leads the process of obtaining Magnet recognition from the American Nurses Credentialing Center (ANCC), the credentialing arm of the American Nurses Association.

"Over her 10-year tenure at UCLA Health, Jessica has played a pivotal role in shaping nursing practice," says Dr. Karen Grimley, chief nursing executive for UCLA Health. "Her expertise spans professional development, evidence-based practice, nursing transitions, teaching methodologies, and the integration of cutting-edge technologies such as virtual reality and simulation. Her commitment is evident in her contributions to the *Core Curriculum for Nursing Professional Development, 6th edition*, and the recent publication of three significant manuscripts."

With a master's in education, Phillips started her career as a health sciences instructor in secondary and higher education. She was an educator in the U.S. and abroad, including

VITALS

Education

UCLA School of Nursing:
PhD '23,
MSN '08

Southern Illinois University: MS '01, BS '98

Credentials

RN, NPD-BC

Current Position

UCLA Health:
Executive Director,
Nursing Practice, Education, and Research, Center for Nursing Excellence

with Teach For America. "I realized I wanted to do more in terms of making a community-level impact and applied to the Master's Entry Clinical Nursing program at UCLA," she says. "I pursued that and never looked back. I really felt like nursing was a calling."

Phillips practiced clinically in oncology and infectious diseases at Cedars-Sinai before transitioning into operational leadership. She started doing informal support of education at Cedars and found the development side of nursing compelling.

She transitioned back to UCLA as a nursing professional development specialist, leading the UCLA Nurse Residency Program in 2014. "The program has received Practice Transition Accreditation Program designation from ANCC twice with distinction," Phillips notes. She was promoted to manager of nursing professional development in 2017, where she established the current educational infrastructure for UCLA Health and led PPE and COVID education, as well as supporting training for diversity, equity, and inclusion.

After publication of a simulation pilot in 2018, Phillips ignited a passion for research and decided to pursue her PhD beginning in 2020 in order to grow and develop as a nurse scientist. In the UCLA School of Nursing PhD program, "faculty did such a nice job of sequentially aligning coursework so I could continue to take steps toward formalizing my own research," she says.

"Jessica has played a pivotal role in shaping nursing practice." — Dr. Karen Grimley, chief nursing executive for UCLA Health

Phillips completed her PhD in three years while continuing to work full time. She received UCLA Nursing's PhD Dissertation Award in 2023 for *Impact of a Virtual Reality Simulation Modality Compared to Traditional Education on Nurse Knowledge, Nurse Behavior, and C'difficile Rates: A Randomized Controlled Trial and ROI Analysis*.

"The educational training I received at the UCLA School of Nursing has prepared me to address the current challenges in nursing at a health system level," Phillips says. "I am grateful for the time and dedication of faculty to support my aspirations and goals." ●

MEETING COMMUNITY NEEDS

Through expanding educational pathways at all levels — including the newly established Post BSN-DNP program — UCLA Nursing is addressing the most critical challenges facing nursing and healthcare.



WRITTEN BY

Dan Gordon

ILLUSTRATIONS BY

Debora Szpilman

When Gloria Garcia entered the UCLA School of Nursing's Bachelor of Science in Nursing prelicensure program as a transfer student in the fall of 2023, it represented the fulfillment of a dream, and the culmination of an unlikely journey.

Born and raised in Guadalajara, Mexico, Garcia was an A student with an interest in science and healthcare ignited by her love of the popular *Grey's Anatomy* television series. But unlike many classmates inspired by a family member or other adult mentor to pursue a nursing career, Garcia never gave nursing a second thought until an experience she had as a patient in a small, low-resource clinic in her hometown when she was 17.

"I was sitting there observing all of these overworked, underpaid staff members," Garcia recalls. "But then I saw this nurse, and she looked so happy. She was sweaty, with her hair all over the place, but she was so welcoming and empathetic with her patients, and seemed very content in her role. I never got her name, but after seeing her, I decided that was who I wanted to be."

Garcia's father had moved to Mexico after earning his degree in California, and throughout Gloria's childhood, her parents had spoken of an eventual move to the U.S., where she and her two sisters could pursue college education. In 2018, Garcia's senior year of high school, the family settled in Visalia, a small community in California's Central Valley.

By then, Garcia was determined to do what she could to qualify for a prestigious nursing school. After completing high school online and earning her GED while attending an English as a Second Language program, she enrolled in a community college to fulfill the science prerequisites that would allow her to apply as a transfer student. During that period, one of her sisters bought Garcia a UCLA blue and gold sweatshirt. "I wore it all the time, even on occasions when everyone was dressed up," she recalls, smiling. "In my mind, that was my school."

By the time Garcia was ready to apply, UCLA Nursing had just welcomed



its largest-ever transfer class. Support from the University of California system and a grant funded by the California Department of Health Care Access and Information allowed the school to more than double its transfer student scholars. The Song-Brown grant, awarded to Dr. Robert Lucero, UCLA Nursing professor and the Inaugural Audrienne H. Moseley Endowed Chair in Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion, aims to increase the number of diverse students receiving quality higher education and skills training to address unmet needs throughout California.

The expansion of the BS prelicensure transfer program is one of a multitude of ways in which the school is helping to meet the abundant needs of the nursing

workforce, through both existing programs and the initiation of UCLA Nursing's newest pathway — the Post Bachelor of Science in Nursing to Doctor of Nursing Practice (Post BSN-DNP), which will prepare RNs to become experts and leaders in advanced practice while completing a clinically oriented doctoral degree in nursing. The Post BSN-DNP Program welcomes its inaugural cohort in fall 2025.

"The nursing shortage is a massive national and global problem, both overall and in specific areas across healthcare settings," says Dr. Barbara Bates-Jensen, professor and associate dean for academic affairs at the school. "The goal of our education programs is to help provide the nurses needed for both California and the U.S., and we are doing that at all levels."

“THE GOAL OF OUR EDUCATION PROGRAMS IS TO PROVIDE THE NURSES NEEDED FOR BOTH CALIFORNIA AND THE U.S.”

– Dr. Barbara Bates-Jensen



dire need, including in mental and behavioral health, pediatrics, and women's health, Bates-Jensen adds.

The Post BSN-DNP will prepare BS-educated registered nurses to become nurse practitioners, as well as providing them with doctoral-level knowledge and skills in advanced nursing practice, organizational and systems leadership, quality improvement and evidence-based practice, healthcare policy, population health, ethics, interprofessional collaboration, and quality and safety of patient care. Students will be able to choose from one of four specialties: Adult/Gerontology Acute Care Nurse Practitioner; Adult/Gerontology Primary Care Nurse Practitioner; Family Nurse Practitioner; and Pediatric Dual Primary/Acute Care Nurse Practitioner.

Dr. Theresa Brown, UCLA Nursing assistant adjunct professor and director of the program, explains that as a practice-oriented degree, the DNP focuses on translational science aimed at improving clinical outcomes.

The American Hospital Association has estimated that 1.1 million more bedside nurses are currently needed, and as the population ages that number is likely to increase. "The COVID-19 pandemic was extremely hard on nurses, causing a lot of burnout — and not just among those who were ready to retire, but also young nurses," Bates-Jensen says.

The school is doing its part to ease the shortage of bedside nurses through its BS prelicensure program for both freshman and transfer students, and through the two-year Master's Entry Clinical Nursing (MECN) program. The MECN program enables individuals who have a degree in another field — and, for some, an established position in another profession — to enter at the master's level, pivoting to a career as a bedside or public health nurse. Bates-Jensen notes that both prelicensure programs have begun to incorporate the new American Association of Colleges of Nursing Essentials for prelicensure education into the curriculum as part of a national movement toward competency-based education.

Some of the most acute areas of shortage will be addressed by the advanced

“THE DNP OPENS YOUR EYES TO SEE THE BROADER PICTURE, UNDERSTAND THE ISSUES AND WHERE THE PROBLEMS ARE, AND THEN PLAY A LEADERSHIP ROLE.”

– Dr. Theresa Brown

practice nurses who enroll in UCLA Nursing's newest educational pathway, the Post BSN-DNP. Bates-Jensen points out that as the population ages, more elders are requiring care that is both expensive and complex. "We have growing numbers of people with multiple chronic conditions to manage, and we have far fewer primary care physician providers who work with this population than we need," Bates-Jensen says. "This creates a great demand for advanced practice registered nurses trained in adult geriatric care, since we know from multiple studies that nurse practitioners provide care equal to, if not better than, physician primary care providers." Nurse practitioners are also ideally suited to address other areas of

"Health sciences research findings can take years to be implemented at the bedside," she says. "Our DNPs bridge academia and practice — promoting evidence-based care by bringing the findings to clinical settings much faster to improve patient outcomes."

The three-year Post BSN-DNP curriculum is being developed in partnership with colleagues from UCLA Health and its affiliates, some of whom will also participate in the teaching, Brown notes. Students will spend much of their first year taking DNP theory courses, with clinical courses introduced in the second year to ensure they are prepared for their national certification exams when they graduate. As part of the program, they

will analyze and synthesize research findings on their project's topic, followed by the implementation of their project in a practice setting.

The trend toward advanced practice nurse practitioners obtaining their DNP is reflective of nurses' growing role in healthcare. "This is the wave of the future," Brown says. "Nursing represents the largest profession in healthcare, and yet in the past we have had a small voice because not enough nurses get involved in health policy and legislative activities. The DNP opens your eyes to see the broader picture, understand the issues and where the problems are, and then play a leadership role in implementing evidence-based changes."

The national nursing shortage is compounded by the significant shortage of nursing faculty. In that regard, the school's PhD program is fulfilling a critical need by preparing individuals who will both build on the science that supports nursing and be equipped to teach the next generation of nursing students.

There is also a strong need to bring more diversity to the nursing profession, as well as to nursing faculty. In California, where Hispanics make up approximately 40% of the population, less than 10% of the RN workforce is Hispanic. Nationally, less than 5% of nursing faculty are Hispanic. At UCLA and five partner campuses, these shortages are being addressed through a program in which underrepresented students in baccalaureate, master's, and DNP programs receive mentoring and research experience designed to increase the likelihood that they will pursue a PhD and become nursing faculty.

The Nursing Professoriate Pathway Program (NP3) will recruit and support underrepresented students over a five-year period for what Dr. Robert Lucero, UCLA Nursing professor and the Audrienne H. Moseley Endowed Chair in Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion, calls a "system-level intervention" that enriches their nursing education. The program is part of the University of California Office of the President's Hispanic Serving Institution Doctoral Diversity Initiative, which aims to attract underrepresented students to doctoral programs toward the goal of developing

nursing faculty reflective of the state's diversity. The program leverages the expertise of five federally designated Hispanic Serving Institutions, one Minority Serving Institution, and two healthcare systems in Southern California. UCLA Nursing's partner institutions include Mount Saint Mary's University Nursing Department; three California State University nursing schools (Los Angeles, Long Beach, and Channel Islands); Charles R. Drew University of Medicine and Science's Mervyn M. Dymally School of Nursing; UCLA Health Nursing; and Cedars-Sinai Nursing.

At the heart of the year-long NP3 program is a four-week summer immersion experience that instills in participants the knowledge and skills they need to conduct academic research and pursue a career in the professoriate. Trainees engage in research at least 20 hours per week, including one-on-one meetings with mentors, lab meetings, journal clubs, research presentations/seminars, and independent research. The participants then continue engaging with their mentors through the following spring, culminating in a podium presentation of

the research they conducted. "We are building a community of learners and scholars who can benefit not only from their mentors, but also from the influence of their peers," Lucero says. He notes that 80% of the first cohort, after completing the 2024 summer immersion, reported that they plan to apply to a PhD program, and all of these students intend to apply to UCLA.

UCLA Nursing has been all that Gloria Garcia hoped it would be, and then some. "Last year, we had guest speakers come to my lectures from different nursing areas, and it was incredible to see all of the possibilities for my future," Garcia says.

In September, as she started her second of three years in UCLA Nursing's BSN program, Garcia joined her classmates in the Skills & Simulation Lab for the first time, learning about sterile gloving technique. "After a year of theory, I had the opportunity to put on scrubs," Garcia says. "I was nervous, but the other students and professors were so supportive. I felt like a nurse, and it was amazing." ●





A SMOOTH PATH

Student Affairs supports UCLA Nursing students at every stage of the journey to their degree.

WRITTEN BY

Nancy Sokoler Steiner

PHOTOS BY

Matt Harbicht

As one of the top-rated nursing schools in the nation, UCLA Nursing provides a rich education to students whether they plan to enter patient care, research, educational, or leadership roles. However, whether a student thrives depends on more than what happens in the classroom or clinic. The school's Student Affairs Office addresses the gamut of non-academic factors that influence student success.

"The team in Student Affairs chose their profession to make a difference in the development and well-being of students," says Dr. Elizabeth Yzquierdo, associate dean of student affairs. "We apply National Academic Advising Association evidence-based frameworks. For example, the strength-based approach focuses on identifying each student's talents and vision for the future. We assist them with the next steps to help them excel academically and professionally. We work closely with our staff and faculty at the school to support our students."

Recruitment and Admissions

Third-year PhD student Lisa Diaz (MSN '10) first interacted with Student Affairs when a member of the admissions team came to Cerritos College, where she was

a BSN student. "The whole reason I went to UCLA for my MSN was because of that visit," says Diaz.

Yzquierdo notes that many school visits and presentations target schools that are under-resourced or have many underrepresented students. The admissions team provides guidance to prospective students and develops long-term relationships with them as they assist students in navigating the application process. The team works closely with campus partners, local community colleges, and universities to diversify the nursing workforce.

Third-year undergraduate nursing student Emily Diep attended a virtual tour online, a helpful option during the height of COVID-19. Once accepted, she attended a meeting for newly admitted students featuring Dean Lin Zhan and other school leadership. "They talked about what we would experience in the coming four years and gave us a chance to get our questions answered," Diep says.

Student Affairs recently revamped part of the orientation process for incoming students. "It used to be an all-day, in-person session providing a lot of information in a very short amount of time, and included onboarding, HIPAA forms, etc.," Yzquierdo says. "COVID prompted us to present the information

online, and we worked closely with our educational development team to create a virtual onboarding process. Once we saw how well it worked, we kept and expanded that model, allowing students to complete it at their own pace.”

After earning her MSN from the school, Diaz took a 12-year break to work as a diabetes educator and raise her children. She returned in 2022 to pursue her PhD. Diaz had questions about her application and her statistics class, all of which were answered by Student Affairs staff, including Dr. Mark Covin, director of outreach and admissions.

Diaz also attended financial aid and scholarship workshops hosted by Leonie Thomas, director of financial aid. As a result, she applied for and was granted a Cota-Robles Graduate Fellowship, a four-year fellowship for entering PhD students.

UCLA Nursing provides government-funded financial need-based scholarships as well as private scholarships. Last year, the school awarded \$4.63 million in scholarships, of which \$1.8 million was from the nursing school

itself. Student affairs officers (SAOs) follow up with scholarship recipients to make sure they progress as required and report on their status as needed. The school’s website provides an extensive list of resources on its External Scholarships web page.

Engagement and Development

Yzquierdo notes that many Student Affairs initiatives focus on building community and helping students increase camaraderie and a sense of belonging. Others focus on student well-being, such as stress reduction and having fun during the intensive experience of earning a nursing degree. Still others focus on practicalities, such as a presentation to DNP and PhD students about the journey to a doctoral degree.

Just before school starts, Student Affairs hosts an orientation for all nursing students, giving them the opportunity to

↓ Elizabeth Yzquierdo (center), associate dean for student affairs, leads the Student Affairs team.

“The team in Student Affairs chose their profession to make a difference in the development and well-being of students.”

– Dr. Elizabeth Yzquierdo





meet one another across the different degree programs and cohorts. Early in the fall quarter, Student Affairs coordinates a Student Organization Fair, facilitating an opportunity for students to connect with their peers. Weekly programs, ranging from networking with alumni to pet therapy to breakfast socials, give students ample opportunities to engage.

Diaz takes advantage of many of these opportunities. She joined LANSAs, the Latino(a) Nursing Student-Alumni Association, and recently presented to the group about diabetes. She attended lunchtime lectures and was particularly impressed by one given by Dr. David Hayes-Bautista, UCLA professor of medicine, on a phenomenon known as the Latino medical paradox. Student Affairs hosted a PhD student luncheon in response to student requests, and Diaz is working with the department to form a PhD student club.

Diaz says one of her most impactful experiences was serving as a teaching assistant (TA). Student Affairs manages TA assignments and promotes TA workshops provided by the university. "I've been able to see my strengths and areas for growth through the eyes of my faculty member, and was honored to be invited back to TA with the same instructor this year," Diaz says.

As an undergraduate, Diep has taken advantage of leadership opportunities by joining a newly formed student group that is part of the California Nursing Student Association. The group organizes service events such as enlisting students to create no-sew blankets for unhoused individuals. Diep works closely with SAOs to publicize events, and they help her with supplies and logistics. She's a member of the Alpha Tau Delta nursing fraternity, which participates in community service events, and the Asian Pacific Islanders Nursing Student Association, which holds health fairs in communities across Los Angeles.

← The UCLA Nursing Student Affairs office addresses the gamut of non-academic factors that influence student success.

Throughout their time at the school, nursing students get questions answered, issues solved, and ideas supported by SAOs, who advise students and connect them with various resources.

Graduation and Beyond

In the spring, alumni, local agencies, and other community partners participate in 30-minute Q&A sessions or panels about nursing residency programs and nursing opportunities. Student Affairs also hosts résumé and cover letter workshops to help students prepare for what comes after graduation.

SAOs work closely with PhD students to file paperwork and handle the logistics involved with submitting and defending their dissertations. The department features PhD students and their research on the school's website, increasing student visibility to potential employers. Student Affairs also hosts a white coat ceremony for Advanced Practice Registered Nurse students and the Blue and Gold Ceremony recognizing BS and Master's Entry Clinical Nursing students for earning their RN licenses.

Student Affairs works closely with the school's Office of Development to keep in touch with alumni, who participate in career panels and serve as mentors and preceptors for students.

PhD student Lisa Diaz sums up her experience with the school. "Student Affairs has supported my journey as a PhD student since my first encounter with them at community college, where they gave me hope and planted the seed to attend my dream nursing school at UCLA." ●

"Student Affairs has supported my journey as a PhD student since my first encounter with them at community college."

– Lisa Diaz

BEING A Bruin Nurse



WICKY NGUYEN
MSN / MECN '23

"For me, being a Bruin Nurse means to provide compassionate, informed, and safe health-care to not only our patients, but to also our communities, humanity, and ourselves; to become a lifelong learner; and to be a leader to serve one another and change the world."

JUSTINI
PAALISBO
MSN/MECN '23

"A Bruin Nurse is more than a profession; it's a profound calling to serve and uplift individuals and communities, driven by a deep sense of compassion, respect, and dedication to improving health outcomes. Bruin Nurses are resilient and are always ready to succeed in challenging environments."



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Life Lessons:

Community- Engaged Learning

WRITTEN BY
Dan Gordon

PHOTOS BY
Aaron Hilf

In a popular course offered through UCLA Nursing and the interdepartmental Disability Studies Program, students gain an appreciation for the lived experiences of people with disabilities, providing a foundation for effective healthcare and advocacy.



↑ As part of the course "Care Work: Disability Justice and Healthcare," students learn how to best serve people with disabilities.



↑ Dr. Lauren Clark, UCLA School of Nursing professor and the Shapiro Family Endowed Chair in Developmental Disabilities Studies, is a strong advocate for community-engaged learning.

“ONLY AFTER STUDENTS HAVE AN UNDERSTANDING OF WHERE NURSING IS POSITIONED RELATIVE TO THE LIVED EXPERIENCE OF DISABILITY CAN THEY BEGIN TO LEARN AND EFFECTIVELY APPLY THOSE CLINICAL SKILLS.”

– Dr. Lauren Clark

A significant portion of educating nursing students is devoted to placing them in clinical environments, where they work with mentors to learn the core skills involved in caring for patients. So when Dr. Lauren Clark, UCLA School of Nursing professor and the Shapiro Family Endowed Chair in Developmental Disabilities Studies, speaks on the importance of community-engaged learning (CEL), she is sometimes met with skepticism.

“Students taking part in CEL aren’t there to learn clinical skills or practice being a nurse,” notes Clark. “They are there to engage with the community — as a partner and at times an advocate, learning and growing around the community’s chosen priorities.”

Clark views CEL as foundational for preparing nurses to best serve people with disabilities. “If we don’t employ our skills to help people in communities live their best lives, we will never be able to be effective in using nursing skills, theory, and interventions,” she says. “Only after students have an understanding of where nursing is positioned relative to the lived experience of disability can they begin to learn and effectively apply those clinical skills.”

Clark has been an advocate for CEL since the outset of her career, when it was referred to as service learning. The principle remains largely the same. “It’s not just volunteerism, and it’s not clinical,” she says. “It’s a balance that helps the student come up with new ways of thinking

about themselves and the role of compassion, empathy, communication, and other basic nursing skills. In this case, it’s exposing them to the disability community and learning what their challenges are, as well as how nursing can be a force for good in their lives.”

For the last three years Clark has taught a course, “Care Work: Disability Justice and Healthcare,” that includes both a two-unit theory portion and a three-unit, 60-hour CEL practicum. Offered through both UCLA Nursing and the interdepartmental Disability Studies Program on campus, the course brings nursing students together with students from a wide array of majors — both within and outside of the health sciences. “Nurses are partners in caring for people with disabilities, so having our nursing students learning alongside students who will be going into other professions is invaluable preparation for them,” Clark says of the course, which has tripled in enrollment over the three years it’s been offered.

During the theory section of the course, students learn about the “webs of care” people with disabilities have — including family members and other close relationships; schools, hospitals and clinics; and society at large, in the form of policies and laws that confer services and rights. “Those of us in the caring professions need to appreciate the care work that is already embedded within the disability community, and amplify those efforts rather than trying to supplant the work that’s occurring,” Clark explains.

The CEL experience is facilitated by Momentum, a disability organization that empowers children and adults with disabilities through community partnerships, services, and advocacy. Students are paired with an adult recipient of Momentum services — their “learning leader” — as well as meeting with a panel of adults with disabilities to learn more about the lived experiences of being disabled in Los Angeles and ways in which care work falls short. “We talk in class about issues such as access to reproductive healthcare for people with disabilities, or being able to obtain various levels of care for their children and themselves as they enter into parenting,” Clark says. “More than just the theoretical understanding you get from a lecture, it’s so important to see things through the eyes of an individual.”

As part of the CEL practicum, the students develop a project in collaboration with a person with disabilities. One student worked with a woman with cerebral palsy to create several episodes of a video food blog showing ways to overcome fine motor challenges through certain recipes and approaches to cooking. Another advocated for a woman who hadn’t had a pelvic exam in 12 years because of problems with accessible exam tables and the lack of knowledgeable providers. The student’s efforts continued well after the class ended, and when she ultimately helped her learning leader find an appropriate provider, the student accompanied her to the appointment.

“MORE THAN JUST THE THEORETICAL UNDERSTANDING YOU GET FROM A LECTURE, IT’S SO IMPORTANT TO SEE THINGS THROUGH THE EYES OF AN INDIVIDUAL.”

– Dr. Lauren Clark

Preserving Decision-Making Autonomy for People With Disabilities

A multidisciplinary team co-led by UCLA Nursing’s Dr. Kristen Choi has been contracted by the state to develop a digital resource library that will promote an alternative to conservatorship.



↑ Dr. Kristen Choi

A UCLA School of Nursing associate professor is co-leading a multidisciplinary team that received funding from the California State Council on Developmental Disabilities to build a digital resource

library aiming to facilitate supported decision making (SDM) as an alternative to conservatorship for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities or other disabilities.

Under California’s conservatorship law, a court can appoint a guardian to make healthcare, financial, and other important decisions for people determined to lack the capacity to manage their own affairs. While these conservatorships may be appropriate for some individuals, many disability rights advocates have raised concerns. “We have recognized over time that conservatorship isn’t always the right answer for people with disabilities, and that eroding someone’s

autonomy to make their own decisions about their health can have negative consequences,” says Dr. Kristen Choi, UCLA Nursing associate professor and Audrienne H. Moseley Chair in Nursing.

In her work as a psychiatric mental health nurse practitioner, Choi has worked firsthand with patients at different stages of the conservatorship process because of disabilities or disabling mental illness. “Many people with disabilities, even if they are serious disabilities or affect cognition, are aware of when their freedom is being restricted or when decisions are being made for them,” she says. “I’ve seen that this erosion of autonomy can be painful and counterproductive to what people with disabilities actually need.”

SDM has gained momentum in recent years as an alternative framework for supporting people with disabilities or impairments with their decisions while preserving their autonomy. Rather than involving the courts, SDM allows the individual to designate people who will support them (such as family members, friends, and trusted professionals), and those individuals assist the person with a disability in reaching informed decisions.

In 2022, California passed A.B. 1663, a law intended to advance SDM as a less restrictive alternative to conservatorship, while ensuring that conservatorships be used only as a last resort. The new law established funding through the State Council on Developmental Disabilities for community-based organizations to implement existing SDM tools with their clients, or to build new ones. As the state invests in these new resources, it will partner with a UCLA team led by

Choi and Dr. Linda Demer, professor of medicine, physiology, and bioengineering, to develop a digital-supported decision-making resource library. The team will establish a framework for organizing the newly developed SDM resources to make them more accessible.

“We have recognized over time that conservatorship isn’t always the right answer for people with disabilities.”

– Dr. Kristen Choi

In addition to Choi and Demer, the group includes Dr. Lauren Clark, UCLA Nursing professor whose research aims to support the autonomy and quality of life of people with disabilities; Dr. Kathryn Keitzman, a social worker who is a senior research scientist with the UCLA Center for Health Policy Research; Dr. Emily Hotez, a developmental psychologist whose research focuses on autistic individuals’ experiences of stigma and marginalization; and students from UCLA Nursing and other parts of the campus. “We have a great range of people across topic expertise and disciplines, and we all bring a practice lens to this work,” Choi says. “We’re excited to incorporate perspectives from disability experts and people with lived experience of disability as we evaluate supported decision making tools to ensure that people in California can benefit from them.” ●

“[STUDENTS] ARE THERE TO ENGAGE WITH THE COMMUNITY ... LEARNING AND GROWING AROUND THE COMMUNITY’S CHOSEN PRIORITIES.”

– Dr. Lauren Clark

Clark is part of another community-engaged project as the first recipient of the Judy Heumann Award through the UCLA Disabilities Studies program. The award aims to amplify disability justice and challenge ableism on campus through a community partnership. It is named after the late disability rights activist and icon for the movement, whom Clark was instrumental in bringing to UCLA as the Regents Lecturer in 2021. With the award, Clark is working in partnership with Keris Myrick, host of the “Unapologetically Black Unicorns” podcast, to screen the film *Unseen* on campus, depicting chasms in care for people with disabilities.

In preparing future nurses to best serve patients with disabilities, Clark feels strongly that learning both in and from the community is essential to understanding the challenges they bring to the healthcare setting.

“Many of our students have had very limited exposure to people with disabilities before the class, and they are often incredibly nervous the first time they meet an adult with a disability,” Clark says. “They keep journals throughout the community-engaged experience, and it’s not uncommon for them to reflect at the end and marvel at how much they’ve grown. They realize that this is a person with many similarities to them, and express that they now fully understand the humanity of that individual in a way they didn’t before.” ●



*Dan Gordon**Matt Harbicht*

A Healthy Partnership

The UCLA School of Nursing and UCLA Health Nursing have forged an academic/practice bond that uses integration, collaboration, and synergies to benefit patients, families, students, and communities.

By any measure, the UCLA School of Nursing is a world leader in addressing the most critical healthcare issues of the day through groundbreaking research, community engagement, and educational programs that prepare the next generation of nurses at the baccalaureate, master's, and doctoral levels. Likewise, UCLA Health Nursing is internationally renowned for its leadership in providing healthcare — whether it's at the hospitals in Westwood and Santa Monica, community clinics, or sites throughout Southern California that reach some of the region's most vulnerable populations.

But until recently, UCLA's nursing school and UCLA Health's nursing service have largely operated as separate entities, with little coordination — despite the fact that they share overarching goals and their leadership teams are a mere stone's throw apart.

"In the past, there has been a disconnect between academic nursing and practice nursing," says Dr. Lin Zhan, the UCLA School of Nursing's dean. "In the traditional model, our contacts tended to be around finding clinical placements for students. But the nursing practice leaders didn't necessarily know what our students were taught, or the competencies they graduated with."

"This partnership is enabling us to create a robust pipeline of newly graduated nurses who are well educated and prepared to succeed."

— Dr. Karen Grimley, Chief Nursing Executive, UCLA Health

When Zhan arrived at the school in 2021, one of the first people she met with was Dr. Karen Grimley, chief nursing executive for UCLA Health and a kindred spirit when it came to the belief that a stronger academic/practice partnership could bring a multitude of benefits to both sides. "We have a shared goal,"

← Dr. Karen Grimley (second from right), chief nursing executive for UCLA Health, with School of Nursing students.

“A healthy academic and practice partnership helps us achieve shared goals to build healthier communities through nursing.”

– Dr. Lin Zhan, Dean,
UCLA Nursing

Zhan explains. “As a school, we want to develop nursing science that supports innovation and evidence-based care, and to prepare nurses who are practice-ready and can help transform healthcare to be both accessible and just. UCLA Health Nursing is seeking the same outcome.”

Together, Zhan and Grimley have designed a framework for a strengthened academic/practice partnership. Their model aims to use integration, collaboration, and synergies to promote health equity, innovation, and excellence. At the center of these efforts are the partnership’s ultimate beneficiaries — patients and their families, students, and communities.

UCLA’s academic and practice nursing leaders are taking their cue from a national push, spearheaded by the American Organization for Nursing Leadership (AONL) and American Association of Colleges of Nursing (AACN). In 2023, the two organizations assembled practice leaders and nursing deans to capture key challenges and priorities facing the practice and academic worlds, and to determine how they could work together to better address them. The organizations identified five domains as part of their shared vision for integrating nursing education and practice: striving toward health equity, moving to competency-based nursing education, sustaining the supply of highly educated nurses, leading innovation to maximize nursing’s impact, and ensuring continuous advancement of nursing.

That vision of a stronger academic/practice partnership has already begun to be realized at UCLA, starting at the highest levels. Grimley holds a position at the School of Nursing as assistant dean; in that role, she participated in the development of the school’s strategic plan. In turn, Grimley has moved to bring Zhan into UCLA Health Nursing leadership meetings. “This partnership between the dean and the chief nursing executive is rare nationally, and it has really helped to break down walls,” Grimley says.

One of the most consequential outcomes is that the school’s graduates leave with the clinical knowledge and skills UCLA Health Nursing seeks. “Often, changes in nursing care delivery take years to migrate into an evidence-based practice that would make it into the curriculum of a nursing school,” Grimley explains. “This partnership helps to ensure that the curriculum and practice of nursing remain current and state of the art.”

In conjunction with UCLA Health Nursing, the school has adopted AACN’s “The New Essentials: Core Competencies for Professional Nursing Education,” which establishes the clinical competencies nurses are required to demonstrate in order to practice. Newly graduated pre-licensure hires start in a residency program, strengthening their skills and knowledge through didactic and hands-on experiences under the supervision of a preceptor. “It’s a great benefit to know what they’re teaching next door, so that we are aware of what we’re getting when pre-licensure students come for their clinicals,” Grimley says. Along with providing input on the school’s curriculum, five UCLA Health Nursing leaders hold in-kind faculty positions in the school’s Doctor of Nursing Practice program, teaching and mentoring students’ scholarly projects, while other UCLA Health nurses teach in the Advanced Practice Registered Nurse master’s program and the Bachelor of Science program.

Beyond the clinical competencies, Zhan and Grimley see the academic/practice partnership as an opportunity to educate students in ways that reflect current and future healthcare priorities and the evolving role of nurses in hospitals, clinics, and communities. They point to the growing emphasis on health

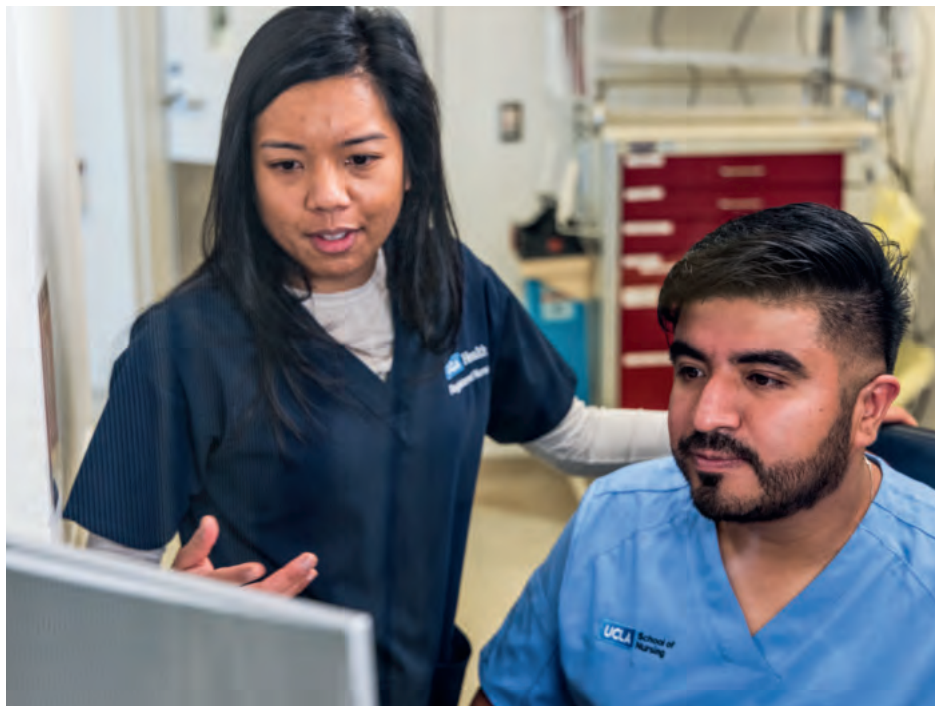
↓ Nicole Pablico, a third year BS in Nursing student, experiencing clinical rotations at Ronald Reagan UCLA Medical Center.



promotion and disease prevention, and on the long-term management of chronic illnesses that many people now live with for decades. Zhan notes that more than ever, today's nurses are considered partners with physicians, bringing not just their clinical know-how but also strengths in education, communication, and cultural sensitivity. "I share with our faculty that if you teach your students what you were taught, how can we prepare future nurse leaders?" Zhan says. "We want to prepare dreamers, thinkers, and doers — students who can question things and act as change agents."

In the hospital rooms and clinics, Grimley has capitalized on the scholarly expertise of the UCLA School of Nursing faculty — inviting the school's nurse scientists to conduct research in the practice setting that bolsters UCLA Health Nursing's evidence base and quality of care; to mentor UCLA Health nurse scientists in their research; and to collaborate in introducing innovation to improve patient care. As a flagship of the research partnership, the UCLA Health Center for Nursing Excellence and the UCLA School of Nursing annually co-sponsor the UCLA Nursing Science & Innovation Conference — drawing nursing scientists, clinicians, educators, students, and leaders from across the country for a day-long event to raise awareness of new healthcare trends while supporting quality improvement, evidence-based practice, research, and innovation at the bedside. The most recent conference, held in May, featured more than 60 poster presentations from researchers, clinicians, educators, and students representing the UCLA School of Nursing and UCLA Health.

The academic/practice partnership also provides a myriad of opportunities for UCLA School of Nursing students to participate in impactful hands-on learning activities under the apprenticeship of UCLA Health nurses — not only in the hospital or clinic setting, but also in the community. Many of the school's students are placed with UCLA Health's Homeless Healthcare Collaborative, which provides free primary and urgent care services to people experiencing homelessness in Los Angeles via mobile clinics that visit streets and shelters, encampments, interim housing sites, libraries, and soup kitchens. Each year, UCLA School of Nursing students join



↑ Jesus Maya, a UCLA Nursing MECN student, working with a UCLA Health registered nurse.

with faculty, UCLA Health nurses, and others in volunteering at Care Harbor, which delivers free medical, dental, and vision care to uninsured, underinsured, and underserved individuals.

"It's vital that our students understand that health is not just biological and physical; there are also social determinants," Zhan says. "These learning opportunities with our practice partners are invaluable."

Just as UCLA Health nurses enhance the education of UCLA School of Nursing students through these and other hands-on experiences, Grimley notes that the school can help strengthen UCLA Health Nursing's approach to training its nurses through the teaching expertise of the school's faculty. Toward that end, Grimley and Zhan have begun discussing ways to bring UCLA Health nurses and nursing students together for teaching and training activities at the UCLA Simulation Center. They point out that the center can also serve as a venue for increased interdisciplinary interactions involving students, faculty, and practitioners from UCLA Health and all of the health professional schools — nursing, medicine, dentistry, and public health.

Most valuable of all, Grimley says, "this partnership is enabling us to create a robust pipeline of newly graduated nurses who are well educated and prepared to succeed. It's pretty great having the UCLA School of Nursing across the street." ●

Signal to Act

Dr. Barbara Bates-Jensen co-invented a device that can identify subclinical signs of pressure injury — a common concern among people with limited mobility that requires early intervention to prevent serious complications.

WRITTEN BY

Dan Gordon

PHOTOS BY

Adam Amengual

↓ The SEM scanner is a small, handheld device that can help cue nursing staff to initiate pressure injury prevention.



A UCLA School of Nursing professor, together with a co-principal investigator at Duke University School of Nursing, is undertaking a multi-year, multi-site study to determine the extent to which technology she co-invented can enhance the ability of nursing home staff to intervene early enough to prevent pressure injuries — painful damage to the skin and tissue that most often occurs in people with limited mobility and, when not well managed, can lead to serious infections and even death.

Sometimes referred to as pressure ulcers or bedsores, pressure injuries occur because of mechanical forces against the skin — namely, pressure and shear — that inflict damage by cutting off blood flow to the tissues, causing cells to deform and tissue to die, explains Dr. Barbara Bates-Jensen, UCLA Nursing professor. These injuries are a major problem both in acute care settings and in community settings such as nursing homes. According to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, one in 10 nursing home residents will develop a pressure injury. “As nurses, it’s very important that we do what we can to prevent these lesions,” Bates-Jensen says. “They’re costly, they cause significant pain and suffering for the patient, and they have long been associated with the quality of nursing care delivered at an institution.”

For nurses, it’s important to be attuned to which patients are most at risk for developing this type of complication. “Someone who is immobile or unable to move in bed is going to be at high risk from experiencing pressure on the tissues for prolonged periods of time,” Bates-Jensen says. Nursing home residents are vulnerable, Bates-Jensen explains, because they tend to be frail, elder, less mobile, suffering from multiple chronic diseases, and often requiring assistance to move or change positions.

In looking for signs of pressure injuries that will allow them to intervene early enough to prevent significant damage, nurses conduct skin assessments focusing on areas where people are most likely to develop pressure injuries — the sacrum (the bony structure in the lower back, at the base of the spine) and the heels. But this approach has shortcomings. “For a patient or nursing home resident with light skin tones, we can often see that first damage from pressure injury: a redness or erythema of the skin that’s a signal to start our pressure injury prevention program — things like providing support surfaces, repositioning the individual, and ensuring proper nutrition and incontinence care,” Bates-Jensen says. “The problem is that for patients and residents who have medium and dark skin tones, early damage doesn’t necessarily look red, and that discoloration is often missed.”

For most of Bates-Jensen’s career, one of her primary research focuses has been on how to assist nurses in better identifying early pressure injury damage in all individuals, regardless of skin tone. She was initially drawn to a device that measured surface electrical capacitance — the amount of fluid in a specific area of the skin — as an indication of localized edema. Bates-Jensen coined the term sub-epidermal moisture, or SEM, to describe the early pressure injury damage at the sacrum and heels that was picked up by the technology in a large National Institutes of Health-funded study. “The technology was quite good at detecting, and even predicting, damage underneath the skin, which meant it didn’t matter what color the skin was,” she explains.

The drawback to that technology was that it was bulky and clinically impractical. So Bates-Jensen collaborated



↑ For most of her career, Dr. Barbara Bates-Jensen has sought to assist nurses in better identifying early pressure injury damage.

with two UCLA professors — one a computer expert, Dr. Majid Sarrafzadeh, and the other an electrical engineer, Dr. William Kaiser — to co-invent the SEM scanner — a small, handheld

device that uses surface electrical capacitance methods while controlling for the pressure when the sensor is applied to the skin. Through UCLA’s technology transfer program, the device was licensed to Bruin Biometrics, and the company received FDA approval for the device in 2019.

Now Bates-Jensen and Dr. Tracey Yap, a professor at the Duke University School of Nursing, are co-principal investigators on a large NIH-funded study seeking to determine whether putting the SEM scanner in the hands of nursing home personnel will result in their acting earlier to prevent pressure injuries in their frail, vulnerable population.

The researchers are currently in the middle of a four-year study at multiple nursing home sites in New Mexico. As part of an eight-month intervention, the study team is working with the licensed nurses and nurse aides at these homes to incorporate the SEM scanner into standard skin inspection procedures, with results used as a cue for nursing staff

to initiate pressure injury prevention. In addition to measuring the efficacy of SEM assessment, the researchers will examine the feasibility of incorporating the technology in nursing home settings, as well as the ability of the scanner to detect pressure injury damage in individuals with medium and dark skin tones.

“In the past, the nursing home environment has been very low tech,” Bates-Jensen says. “While using the device is fairly simple, it has to be incorporated into existing processes within the nursing home. There are also extreme shortages and high staff turnover rates in these settings, which can pose practical barriers. We are excited to get the feedback from the nursing home staff on what worked well for them and what were the struggles. We think this study will also tell us a lot about how we can best implement technology in this type of healthcare setting, as well as adding to the growing data looking at skin tones and how that may impact the delivery of care.” ●

“WE THINK THIS STUDY WILL TELL US A LOT ABOUT HOW WE CAN BEST IMPLEMENT TECHNOLOGY IN THIS TYPE OF HEALTHCARE SETTING.”

Targeted Stories Help Users Help Themselves

Dr. MarySue Heilemann and her colleagues are studying whether an innovative app can successfully encourage Latina women to address their depression and anxiety.



WRITTEN BY

Nancy Sokoler Steiner

PHOTOS BY

Adam Amengual

Can an involving, targeted story motivate a person to take action to help themselves? Dr. MarySue Heilemann, UCLA School of Nursing professor, predicts it can. Heilemann has created an intervention designed to help Latinas overcome barriers to seeking mental health treatment. *Catalina: Confronting My Emotions/ Enfrentando Mis Emociones* is a choice-driven, professionally produced web-based app users can interact with across multiple digital platforms. Pilot studies showed the app generated more sustained interest and engagement among users

after six weeks than those participants who watched videos about another topic.

Now, the National Institute of Mental Health has awarded Heilemann and her six co-investigators a \$3.68 million, five-year grant to conduct a randomized controlled trial exploring whether the app motivates users to take action at a higher rate than for control group participants. Examples of actions include identifying a place to obtain therapy, making an appointment, keeping the appointment, continuing with therapy, or obtaining and filling a prescription for medication.

↑ Dr. MarySue Heilemann's research team, left to right: Katherine Boiton Rodriguez, Heilemann, Mary-Lynn Brecht, and Daniela Flores Romero.



“MANY STUDIES HAVE LOOKED AT HOW STORIES CHANGE ATTITUDES, BUT FEW HAVE TESTED WHETHER STORIES CAN CHANGE BEHAVIOR.”

“NIH grants are extremely competitive, and they are looking for studies that will move the needle,” Heilemann says. She believes the grant award recognizes the strong investigative team and the groundbreaking nature of the study. “Many studies have looked at how stories change attitudes, but few have tested whether stories can change *behavior*,” Heilemann says. “If this works, it could be easily scalable.” She notes that story-based apps could potentially address a range of health topics such as managing diabetes or high blood pressure, or boosting vaccine compliance.

The study will begin in early 2025 and enroll 876 Latina women who scored on validated scales as having untreated depression or anxiety. Participants will answer questionnaires before starting the study, and at one, five, and nine months afterward.

“Research shows Latina women are not just undertreated, but underdiagnosed due to factors including stigma, cultural concerns, distrust of professionals, and lack of insurance,” Heilemann says. “They often don’t even know they’re struggling with depression and anxiety; they’re just struggling. They don’t seek services or resources because they think their situation is normal. That’s unacceptable. I wanted to create something to show the women it doesn’t have to be this way and they can get help tailored to their needs.”

Heilemann understands the power of a good story to capture the listener. When a story features a character people relate to, she says, they find it irresistible. Movies such as *Star Wars* demonstrate the enthusiasm for interacting with a story as much as possible, such as through comic books, fan fiction, and merchandise.

The phenomenon of expanding and telling a story across multiple platforms is called transmedia, and Heilemann has pioneered its use for mental health interventions. She presented on the topic as a delegate to the 2018 United Nations Commission on the Status of Women.

Heilemann linked the need for a Latina mental health intervention with the idea of transmedia to create the free app. Using the information gleaned from her studies on Latina mental health, she worked with a Latinx scriptwriter (who also served as the director) and therapists to create a script.

← *Catalina: Confronting My Emotions* includes six videos and a blog with a story centering on a 28-year-old Latina single mother of a young child.

Heilemann, the director, his production staff, Latinx actors, a composer, and a sound editor collaborated to create videos and tools accessible by smartphone, tablet, and computer.

Catalina: Confronting My Emotions includes six videos and a blog with a story centering on a 28-year-old Latina single mother of a young child. Participants see Catalina interact with her parents, child, and friends. She encounters setbacks and becomes increasingly aware that she is sad and anxious. Catalina decides to visit a nurse therapist. She later tells her friend what therapy is like and how her therapist helped her.

Participants have the option to view a video of a character portraying Catalina’s nurse therapist, Veronica, who talks about the prevalence of depression and anxiety and assures participants, “It doesn’t have to be that way.” Participants have another option to click on a module Veronica recommends, which explores the obstacles to getting help and what might be needed to overcome those obstacles. They also have access to Veronica’s blog, which includes an array of links to resources including local clinics, hotlines, and mental health information. A Pinterest page for Veronica is in the works. The app collects encrypted and HIPAA-protected data for analysis.

In addition to looking at the actions participants take, the study will examine levels of stigma and attitudes about seeking mental health help and whether participants’ levels of depression and anxiety show a decrease. ●

FACULTY HONORS

Professor Wei-Ti Chen was named a 2023 International Nurse Researcher Hall of Fame inductee by Sigma Theta Tau International Honor Society of Nursing. Chen is also an AARP 2024 Equity-Minded Nurse Award recipient.

Professor Lauren Clark was selected to serve as president of the Western Institute of Nursing Board of Governors.

Associate Adjunct Professor Emma Cuenca was selected to participate in the American Association of Colleges of Nursing's Elevating Leaders in Academic Nursing Program.

Barbara Demman, a senior continuing lecturer in the School of Nursing, was named a recipient of UCLA's 2024 Semel Healthy Campus Initiative Center Eudaimonia Award.

Professor Holli DeVon was named a recipient of the 2023 Outstanding Alumni Achievement Award from the University of Illinois Chicago College of Nursing.

Associate Dean for Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion & Associate Professor Nalo Hamilton was selected to participate in the American Association of Colleges of Nursing's 2025 Diversity Leadership Institute.

→ UCLA Nursing faculty members presiding over the 2023 UCLA Nursing Commencement Ceremony.

Professor Felicia Hodge was elected treasurer of the Native Research Network, a leadership community of American Indian, Alaska Native, Native Hawaiian, and Canadian First Nations promoting integrity and excellence in research.

Professor Robert Lucero was inducted into the American College of Medical Informatics. He was also named a 2024 International Nurse Researcher Hall of Fame inductee by Sigma Theta Tau International Honor Society of Nursing, as well as an AARP 2024 Equity-Minded Nurse Award recipient.

Professor Paul Macey was selected for the inaugural cohort of the UCLA Dialogue Across Difference Faculty Fellow Program.

Assistant Professor Anthony Tolentino was selected as a 2024 Health Disparities Research Institute Scholar by the National Institute on Minority Health and Health Disparities.

Assistant Professor Kristi Westphal was named the 2023 Outstanding NP of the Year by the Los Angeles Chapter of the National Association of Pediatric Nurse Practitioners.

Dean and Professor Lin Zhan was re-elected to the American Association of Colleges of Nursing Board of Directors.

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FUNDED RESEARCH

GRANTS AWARDED BETWEEN JANUARY 2023 AND OCTOBER 2024

Dana Beck, PhD, MSN, MS, FNP-BC

Evaluation of a Los Angeles County Department of Public Health Lived Experience Advisory Board for Maternal Health Equity and Justice — Funding Agency: NIH (CTSI)

Improving Postpartum Care Transitions for Clients With Mental Health Conditions — Funding Agency: NIH (CTSI)

Kristen Choi, PhD, PMHNP-BC, FAAN

Health Care Transition Utilization and Outcomes for Youth With Mental, Behavioral, and Developmental Disorders — Funding Agency: NIH/NIMH

Nurses Address Perinatal Mental Health Inequities Among Black Women: A Feasibility Study — Funding Agency: American Nurses Foundation

Let's Get Set' to Achieve Racial Equity in Tax Credit Receipt and Family Health: An Academic/Start-Up/Community Demonstration Project Implementing a Novel Tax Filing App in Los Angeles — Funding Agency: AARP Andrus Foundation

Digital Resources for Supported Decision-Making: A Gap Analysis and Delphi Project to Promote Autonomy for Individuals with Disabilities — Funding Agency: CA State Council on Developmental Disabilities

Lauren Clark, PhD, RN, FAAN

Experiences of Black Caregivers of Children with Developmental Disabilities — Funding Agency: Sigma Global Nursing Excellence

Emma Cuenca, DNP, RN, CCRN, CSC, CNS

UCLA School of Nursing RN Program — Funding Agency: CA Dept. of Health CA-Department of Health Care Access and Information

Holli DeVon, PhD, RN, FAHA, FAAN

Effects of Acupuncture on Symptoms of Stable Angina: A Randomized Controlled Trial — Funding Agency: NIH/NINR

Stacey Green, DNP, AOCNP, GNP-BC, PMHNP-BC, & Lin Zhan, PhD, RN, FAAN

HCAI PMHNP Program Expansion - Southern California Region — Funding Agency: CA Dept. of Health CA-Department of Health Care Access and Information

MarySue Heilemann, PhD, RN, FAAN

Randomized Controlled Trial of a Choice-driven, Interactive, Storytelling Web-based App to Investigate Mental Health Treatment Initiation Among Symptomatic Latinas — Funding Agency: NIH/NIMH

Paul Macey, PhD

Does Breathing Resistance Training Relax the Body and Calm the Mind? — Funding Agency: Tiny Blue Dot Inc.

Wendie Robbins, PhD, RN, FAAN, FAAOHN

Improving the Health and Safety of Migrant Workers Responding to Climate-Related Disasters — Funding Agency: UC Office of the President

Benissa Salem, PhD, RN, MSN, PHN, CNL

A Pilot Feasibility Trial of HEALTHy Beginnings: A Trauma-Informed, Chronic Disease Self-Care Intervention for Middle-Aged and Older Homeless Women — Funding Agency: The Rita and Alex Hillman Foundation

Chengshi Shiu, PhD, LSW, MS, GStat (visiting research scientist)

Stigma Experiences Among Adults with Tourette Syndrome (SEATS) — Funding Agency: Tourette Association of America

Yeonsu Song, PhD, RN, FNP-C

A Dyadic Approach to Improve Sleep and Well-Being Among Persons with Alzheimer's Disease and Their Caregivers — Funding Agency: NIH/NIA

D. Anthony Tolentino, PhD, RN, NI-BC, FAMIA

Colonial Mentality and Health: Exploring the Narratives and Implications for Filipino Americans — Funding Agency: Racial & Social Justice Seed Grant

Spatial Mapping of Diabetes Self-Management Education and Support (DSMES) Utilization and the Determinants of DSMES Engagement Among Asian Americans With Type 2 Diabetes in Southern California — Funding Agency: NIH (CTSI)

Dottie Wiley, PhD, RN, FAAN

Los Angeles CRS for the MACS/WIHS Combined Cohort Study — Funding Agency: NIH

Wei-Ti Chen, RN, CNM, PhD, FAAN

Project CARE: Californians Access to Resources for Housing and Economic Security to Promote HIV Care — Funding Agency: UC Regents California HIV/AIDS Research Program

ALUMNI NOTES

Afaf I. Meleis, MS '64, MA '66, PhD '68, was honored with the 2023 UCLA Award for Professional Achievement. Although formally retired in 2016, Meleis remains active as a speaker, mentor, consultant, and leader in nursing theory. She will receive the 2024 National Humanism in Medicine Medal from the Arnold P. Gold Foundation.

Lucile Wood, MSN '65, earned a degree in Nursing Service Administration. Now retired, she previously served as a director of nursing and made significant contributions to the field by authoring three foundational nursing textbooks. Wood also provided national consulting services, shaping nursing practices and leadership across the country.

Kelly Guzman, MSN '94, specializes in transition and activation planning for new healthcare facilities. She is the president and CEO of Yellow Brick Consulting, Inc., where she leads projects focused on the seamless opening and operational setup of new medical facilities. In 2023, Guzman was inducted as a Fellow of the American Academy of Nursing.

Brittany Wilson, BS '96, is the president of Inventana Development Inc. She offers consultancy in product, process, and productivity improvement.

Patricia Garduno, MSN '98, is a family nurse practitioner. She works at VNA Central New Jersey, providing care to a primarily underserved population.

Mady Stovall-Culverhouse, BSN '02, MSN '04, after initially specializing in neuro-oncology, has since transitioned to psychiatry. She serves as a faculty specialist at UT Health San Antonio, focusing on adults with serious mental illness. In 2020, she advanced her



↑ Members of the UCLA Nursing Class of 1994 gathered at their 30th Reunion.

expertise by obtaining a PhD from Oregon Health & Science University.

Rosie Saran Jadav, MS '03, is a family nurse practitioner currently working as an administrative nurse practitioner at Kaiser Permanente, where she provides care for patients of all ages.

Linda Kim, MSN '03, PhD '15, is a research scientist at Cedars Sinai Medical Center, focusing on health services and the healthcare workforce.

Enza Esposito Nguyen, MSN '04, specializes in oncology. She is employed as a medical science liaison at AstraZeneca, where she manages and leads breast cancer clinical trials and collaborates with MD Anderson Cancer Center and other institutions at the Texas Medical Center. She obtained her DNP in 2019.

Julie Mathew, MSN '06, is a certified family nurse practitioner. She specializes in college health, providing comprehensive care to adults, children, and geriatric patients.

Kemi Reeves, MSN '09, is a gerontological nurse practitioner. She works as a nurse practitioner at UCLA Health, focusing on dementia care. In 2024, Reeves received the Just Action Summit Health Justice Commitment Award from the UCLA Health Office of Health Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion. She was also promoted to associate director of the UCLA Alzheimer's and Dementia Care Program and director of nursing health care equity for the UCLA Health System.

Lisa Diaz, MSN '10, PhD '24, was awarded the UCLA Graduate Summer Research Mentorship Program award, supporting her dedication to academic research and mentorship. She was selected to receive the 2024 Western Institute of Nursing's Conference Scholarship Award.

Laura Helffeld, MSN '11, works in the field of neurodiversity and disability. She is an independent nurse and sleep consultant through her own practice, Neurodivergent Nurse Consulting, focusing on supporting neurodivergent and disabled community members.

Hellfeld is the author of *Creating Safe Spaces for Autistic People*; the founder of *Autistic Revolution*, an online magazine; and will soon publish a children's book titled *Gabby's Glimmers*.

Eileen Fry-Bowers, PhD '12, is dean and professor at the University of San Francisco's School of Nursing and Health Professions. In 2024, she received the Distinguished Alumnus Award from the University of Rochester School of Nursing, where she completed her MS in 1997.

Carly Morgan, MSN '14, specializes in labor and delivery. She is an RNC-OB at UCLA Health, where she focuses on maternal-child health, providing skilled care and support to mothers and newborns during childbirth.

Megan Guardiano, BS '15, MSN '23, PHN '25, has been selected to receive the UCLA Graduate Research Mentorship award and the 2024 Empowering GI Professional Diversity Scholarship from the Society of Gastroenterology Nurses and Associates.

Emily Downing-Mahli, MSN '16, specializes in neuropalliative care. She is a nurse practitioner at Cedars Sinai Medical Center, focusing on palliative care for patients with serious neurological conditions.

Megan Wesselin, MSN '19, serves as a nursing professional development practitioner at UCLA Health, where she oversees student placements, preceptor development, and professional governance initiatives. She is also pursuing a post-master's certificate in nursing education to further enhance her expertise in nursing education and mentorship.

Julie Daniels McCurdy, MSN '19, specializes in critical care. She is currently attending the University of New England to pursue her CNP and CRNA.

Amy Phung, BSN '19, works in liver and kidney transplant. She is a medical-surgical RN at Keck Medicine of USC.

Yesenia Munoz, BS '20, works in home health and is employed as a registered nurse at Bright Star.

Felipe Gutierrez, PhD '20, worked in inpatient hospital care. He is currently retired due to medical disability. Gutierrez worked as an advanced practice nurse with a focus on alcohol/substance use and de-escalation techniques.

Melanie Altamirano-Cariaga, DNP '20, has taken on a new role at UCLA Health Santa Monica Medical Center as the Stroke Team advanced practice provider supervisor. She is also the center's first stroke nurse practitioner, pioneering specialized stroke care in this setting.

Karima Gulwani, DNP '22, is an adult-gerontology nurse practitioner and serves as a nurse practitioner at Eisner Health. She specializes in chronic disease management for low-income populations.

Justin Paalisbo, MSN '23, specializes in med surg/pediatrics. He serves as a US Navy Nurse Corps Officer, working on active duty in the military.

Lisa Seidl, BSN '24, specializes in pediatric hematology, oncology, and bone marrow transplant intensive care. She is a bedside registered nurse at Loma Linda University Children's Hospital, where she cares for pediatric patients.

Lauren Rodriguez, MSN '24, is specializing in operating room nursing. She will begin her career as a new grad nurse at UCLA Health as part of the new graduate program, where she will gain hands-on experience in perioperative care.

Elaine Ahn, MSN '24, specializes as a family nurse practitioner. As an advanced practice registered nurse, she focuses on providing family-centered care across all age groups.

Zac Karman, MSN '24, is a registered nurse specializing in emergency department nursing at Huntington Health.

Jessica Reiten, MSN '24, specializes in psychiatric nursing. She works as a registered nurse at Gateways Hospital and Mental Health Center, focusing on the acute involuntary adult psychiatric inpatient population.

Mayumi Saiki, PhD Year 4, is a student in occupational and environmental health in nursing. She is employed as a nurse practitioner at PIH Health, specializing in employee health.

Yuriko Matsuo, PhD '25, was recently honored with selection as a Jonas Scholar for the 2024-2026 cohort, recognizing her potential in advancing mental health research and practice.

Marianne Gutierrez, PhD '25, was recently selected as a Jonas Scholar for the 2024-2026 cohort, highlighting her commitment to advancing nursing leadership and research.

Rey Paolo Ernesto J. Roca III, PhD '25, has been honored with the 2024 Distinguished Teaching Award for Teaching Assistants by the UCLA Distinguished Teaching Award Selection Committee, recognizing his excellence in teaching and mentorship.

Santino L. Estrera, DNP '24, has been accepted to the Miller Postdoctoral Fellowship Program for Nurse Executives at the Frances Payne Bolton School of Nursing at Case Western Reserve University. He also received funding from the Doctor of Nursing program's travel award program to attend the 2024 OR Business Management Conference in Phoenix.

Elizabeth Kohout, PhD '25, was awarded the UCLA Graduate Summer Research Mentorship Program award, recognizing her commitment to academic research and mentorship at UCLA.



The UCLA School of Nursing: 75 Years of Innovation, Leadership and Excellence

There's another 75th anniversary to recognize — 75 years since the UCLA School of Nursing launched. It's been pioneering change ever since. In 1929, UCLA offered certificates in public health nursing through extension courses. By 1932, a group of nurses raised their voices about the need for a Department of Nursing within the College of Letters and Science. Their dream was realized in 1944.

A force to be reckoned with was brought to UCLA in 1948 — Lulu Wolf Hassenplug. A true disruptor, Lulu pushed UCLA's first nursing program forward, serving as the first Dean of the UCLA School of Nursing for 20 years. Her goal: to make changes in nursing and nurse education. Hassenplug led the movement to shift nurse education from hospitals to college campuses, helping create the research-based, academically oriented discipline we know today. Most famously, she was also a key figure in the removal of the traditional nursing cap so that students would look like their campus peers.

An endowment to the School of Nursing came in 1980 from Audrienne H. Moseley, a former nurse at Good Samaritan Hospital, who could not have foreseen the impact her bequest of \$5.3M would have. The endowment's market value has ballooned to \$43.7M, making it possible to not only support student scholarships, but to improve student education by creating four chairs to recruit and retain faculty.

Throughout the years, theory-based models conceptualizing nursing care have been developed, tested and utilized at UCLA to meet the most pressing needs in health and wellness. Most recently, UCLA School of Nursing has increased attention on the mental health care crisis facing California. Nearly \$1M received from a California Department of Health Care Access and Information grant will allow UCLA to recruit and train more post-graduate nursing students to meet state mental health care needs.

“Supporting the UCLA School of Nursing means supporting the future of healthcare in Los Angeles and the world. I am incredibly proud of all our school has accomplished and know that together, we can improve the health of all people through nursing.”

— UCLA School of Nursing Dean Lin Zhan

Women & Philanthropy's Linda Gorman has also provided funding to support Psychiatric Mental Health as the School of Nursing works to re-establish that specialty for graduate students. The funds have already supported Associate Professor Kristen Choi, PhD, PMHNP-BC, FAAN on her path to gain licensure in Psychiatric Mental Health for teaching and precepting students in that specialty.

Since its inception, the UCLA School of Nursing has remained a hub of innovation, excellence, and leadership through the power of gifts and grants – preparing students to work from the bedside to the boardroom and empowering faculty to educate, research, and practice at the highest level to serve communities that need it most.

This article was published in a recent Women & Philanthropy newsletter to celebrate the 75th anniversary of the School of Nursing. Women & Philanthropy at UCLA celebrates and inspires women throughout the UCLA community as major donors, leaders, and decision-makers. To learn more about becoming a member, please contact us at wmnphil@support.ucla.edu or (310) 794-2389.

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“The joy of nursing is having the privilege to make a significant impact on people's lives through compassion, empathy, and purposeful advocacy.”

Emily Diep, 3rd Year, BS in
Nursing Program