A DECADE OF GREATNESS:
The School’s Growth Under Dean Marie Cowan
MESSAGE FROM THE DEAN

As many of you already know, in July I announced that after more than 10 years as dean of the UCLA School of Nursing, I will step down on June 30, 2008. Following a year on sabbatical I will return as a member of the school’s faculty.

This last decade has been a wonderfully rewarding experience as we have worked together – faculty, staff, students, alumni and friends – to bring the school to new heights. Our faculty has grown tremendously in both size and stature: By the time 22 new ladder-track full-time equivalent (FTE) faculty are recruited as a result of the new undergraduate and Masters Entry Clinical Nurse (MECN) programs, we will have nearly doubled in faculty size since 1997. The distinguished faculty we have already brought in, many of them nationally and internationally known in their fields, are making remarkable contributions to nursing science – together, they bring in approximately $8 million a year in research awards, mostly from the National Institutes of Health.

In an era when there is a dire need for more nurses at the bedside and in leadership roles, particularly in California, we began an A.D.N.-B.S.-M.S.N. (“bridge”) program that enables associate-degree nurses to get their master’s in three years and, last year, we reinstated our baccalaureate program, as well as a second pre-licensure program, the MECN; we also significantly expanded our doctoral program. To support our programs, we have developed partnerships with local hospitals to assist in providing hands-on clinical training for our students.

We continue to attract extremely bright and talented applicants, as well as a highly diverse student population. This diversity has been strengthened by our ability to provide approximately $2.4 million annually in student scholarship support. Indeed, our school is in sound fiscal shape, with an endowment of approximately $33.6 million and five endowed faculty chairs (up from one a decade ago). We have recently renovated research space, faculty and staff offices, classrooms, and the student lounge, and are renovating the simulation laboratory and computer technology for the new undergraduate program.

Much of the school’s success over the last decade is highlighted in this issue of UCLA Nursing. I am grateful for the kind words of faculty, students, staff and alumni that you will read, and wish to offer my own heartfelt thanks and congratulations to all who have contributed to the success our school has enjoyed, and will continue to enjoy in the future.

Marie J. Cowan, R.N., Ph.D., F.A.A.N.

UCLA SCHOOL OF NURSING ANNUAL ALUMNI & FRIENDS DINNER
A Holiday Gala & Silent Auction Celebrating the Retirement of Dean Marie J. Cowan
SATURDAY, DECEMBER 1, 2007
5:00 p.m. Reception – 6:45 p.m. Dinner
Beverly Hills Country Club 3084 Motor Avenue, Los Angeles
For Inquiries, Call (310) 206-3662
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LIVING LEGEND

Dr. Marie Cowan, who has announced that she will step down as the school’s dean on June 30, 2008, has been chosen to receive the Living Legend Award by the American Academy of Nursing (AAN). Considered one of the highest honors in the nursing field, the award spotlights senior academy members who serve as extraordinary role models and whose lifetime of achievements embody the history of the nursing profession. Cowan was recognized for her dedication during an award ceremony at the AAN’s annual meeting in November.

“Dr. Marie Cowan’s contributions to nursing research span most of her 46-year nursing career, culminating with her role as the dean who restored the UCLA School of Nursing to its status as a top-ranked nursing school,” praised Dr. Nancy Fugate Woods, dean of the University of Washington School of Nursing. “Her efforts to develop a new generation of professors dedicated to being scholars as well as clinicians and educators have made UCLA a leader in nursing research.

Cowan was an intensive care unit nurse for approximately 10 years – among the first such nurses at a time when the roles were being defined to manage the newly formed ICUs. She began her academic career in 1972 with a three-year stint as an assistant professor at Seattle University’s nursing school, then joined the nursing and medical schools of the University of Washington in 1979. Holding a rare triple appointment in the departments of nursing, pathology and cardiology, she rose from assistant professor to the rank of full professor in all three fields.

Arriving at UCLA in 1997, Cowan swiftly developed a reputation as a strong leader due to her innovative ideas and knack for building faculty consensus to translate them into reality. She recruited more than 20 prominent new faculty to the school, greatly expanding the school’s research capacity and restoring its reputation as one of the top 10 nursing schools in the nation. She led the development of an online degree program in nursing administration—the first online degree program ever approved by the University of California. She also established a bioscience curriculum for the school’s doctoral program.

In an effort to combat California’s severe nursing shortage, Cowan led the successful drive to reopen, in 2006, the only undergraduate nursing program in the University of California. The UCLA School of Nursing’s Bachelor of Science Program was immediately flooded with applicants for the 50 slots for pre-RN students. Cowan also designed an entry-level master’s program to train 50 professionals with undergraduate degrees in other disciplines to become clinical nurses. Combined, the new programs boosted the school’s enrollment by 30 percent.

Cowan’s research focuses on cardiovascular science, and has been funded since 1977 by the National Institutes of Health. She has made contributions in the following areas: estimation of myocardial infarct size by electrocardiograms; heart rate variability; psychosocial therapy for sudden cardiac arrest survivors to decrease the risk of mortality.
Cowan served on the first National Institute of Nursing (NIH) peer review group for nursing. This commitment was followed by membership on the NIH’s National Center for Nursing Research (NCNR). Woods wrote: “Working closely with NIH staff to establish the foundation of research priorities that launched several classic programs of nursing research, some of which persist to the present...her contributions to advocacy for nursing research at the national and international levels were significant in our success as a profession with the newest institute at NIH.”

As chair of the Council of Cardiovascular Nursing of the American Heart Association (AHA), Cowan was instrumental in changing the AHA bylaws that allowed nurses to apply and be funded for AHA research grants, as well as being committee members of AHA committees for peer review and grant awards.

Cowan also has more than 20 years of experience teaching graduate-level coursework in cardiovascular nursing, how individual patients adapt to health and illness, advanced clinical therapies, research methods and advanced problem-solving in nursing research. She holds a bachelor’s degree in nursing, a master’s degree in physiology and biophysics, and a doctoral degree in pathology, physiology and biophysics, all earned from the University of Washington.
A Decade of Growth

Under the Leadership of Dean Marie Cowan, the UCLA School of Nursing Has Soared to New Heights

“Marie Cowan believed in me at a time that was pivotal to my career and my success as a new investigator.”
—Dr. Dorothy Wiley
Associate Professor

Growth—In size, in influence, in stature. By every measure, the UCLA School of Nursing has experienced a remarkable decade of progress since Dean Marie Cowan took the leadership reins in 1997.

In 10 years, the number of full-time equivalent (FTE) faculty has increased by 65 percent, and the pace is accelerating. With the reinstated undergraduate program and the new Masters Entry Clinical Nurse (MECN) program, the school has funding for 22 new ladder-track FTE faculty positions; once those positions are filled, the school’s faculty size will have nearly doubled since 1997.

In an era of a severe nursing shortage, particularly in California, student enrollment has likewise grown substantially—85 percent from 1997–98 to the current academic year. By 2009–10, when the undergraduate and MECN programs have reached their enrollment capacity, the number of students at the school will have more than doubled since Cowan’s arrival.

For the last seven years, the school has ranked between 7th and 11th among nursing schools in grant awards from the National Institutes of Health (NIH). Annual contract and grant funding for the school’s faculty nearly doubled between 1997–98 and 2007–08. The school has ranked between 11th and 12th nationally for the last eight years by U.S. News & World Report.

The school’s renewed strength has showed in a dramatic increase in support from its alumni and friends. In the last decade, the amount raised by the school in gifts and endowments each year has grown by more than nine-fold. The school’s endowment has increased by 73 percent. Four new endowed fac-
Center for Biological Nursing Science, to be headed by Dr. Wendie Robbins.

Three important new programs were started: In addition to the new baccalaureate program, for high school graduates to receive a B.S. in nursing, and the new MECN program for persons who already have a B.S. or B.A. in another discipline to receive a master’s in nursing to work at the bedside, the school has since 1998 offered an A.D.N.-B.S.-M.S.N. program (referred to as the “bridge” program), which gives registered nurses who graduated from community colleges an opportunity to receive a B.S. and M.S.N. in three years. The school’s other two programs have continued to grow stronger; the M.S.N. program, which prepares students for advanced practice as nurse practitioners and/or clinical nurse specialists, with subspecialties in acute care, oncology, administration, pediatrics, family, geriatrics, and environmental health; and the Ph.D. program, which prepares much-needed nurse scientists and academics.

Approximately $1.5 million was spent in 2006-07 on renovating the student affairs office and research space, on the heels of an equal amount spent in previous years to renovate all faculty and staff offices and all classrooms. An additional $1.5 million is earmarked in 2008-09 for renovation of simulation laboratory and computer technology for new undergraduate programs, and more space for research is being sought to accommodate the growth of the faculty.

How has it happened?

Dr. Donna Vredevoe, professor emerita at the school and former vice chancellor of academic personnel at UCLA, viewed Cowan’s leadership from a unique perspective: Vredevoe was hired by the school’s first dean, Lulu Wolf Hasseplug, and thus has seen all of the school’s leaders; she has played an active role on the UCLA campus, including service as chair of the Academic Senate; and she served as acting dean during two different periods of the school’s history. Vredevoe points out that when Cowan arrived, the school had just experienced substantial budget cuts from UCLA’s Professional Schools Restructuring Initiative in 1993, which had led to the suspension of the undergraduate program. But Cowan immediately set on a course to rebuild the school.

“What she did, which I thought was very insightful, was to focus with the faculty who were there on getting additional research funding – primarily from the NIH, which provides higher overhead than some of the private agencies,” Vredevoe
explains. The increased infrastructure funding, Vredevoe notes, proved critical to the school’s ability to meet many of its most immediate needs, including acquiring additional laboratory equipment and startup funds for new faculty. These investments, in turn, accelerated grant funding. “She would nurture the junior faculty along, they would then be strongly encouraged to write NIH grants, and when they were successful, that would bring in the overhead,” Vredevoe says. “And this mushroomed as time went on.”

From the start, Cowan made it clear to faculty that a funded grant was an expectation. “At first it was almost startling, because not everyone had seen that way,” says Vredevoe. “But she changed that to create more of a basic science culture, where rather than relying on university funding, you build a research program that can be funded nationally – which is a much more sustainable model.” Faculty who had considerable experience obtaining NIH funding, including Drs. Adey Nyzamathi, Deborah Konak-Griffin, and Cowan herself, served as models for the junior faculty.

To help ensure their success in securing such funding, Cowan provided faculty with “seed” money to help them develop small projects that would produce the data they needed as a prerequisite for the larger grants. “She was the first dean who was serious about making institutional pilot money available for faculty, because she was very savvy about what was required for NIH funding,” Vredevoe says. “She knew that if you went to the NIH with just an idea, it wouldn’t be funded, but if you went with an idea and some pilot data to show that it was feasible, you were much more likely to be successful.”

Cowan solidified this strategy by recruiting faculty who were likely to bring in funding, and impressing on them during the recruitment process that NIH grants were expected at the school. She also pursued a strategy of lightening the administrative responsibilities of these new faculty members for the first several years so that they could get their courses and research programs up and running. “Marie was very willing to protect junior faculty,” says Dr. Mary Woo, professor and former associate dean for research. “At a lot of schools, the junior faculty get dumped on – they teach the classes no one else wants, for example. Marie wanted them to be able to get their research program started, so she actually gave them a decreased teaching workload.”

The effect of this strategy was to reduce the period it typically took for junior faculty to submit their first major research grant. “Without that extra time, faculty often are seeking that grant so late in their pre-tenure period that they have trouble receiving tenure when they come up for it after seven
years,” says Vredevoe. “This made faculty more likely to get tenure, which is exactly what happened.” While improving faculty retention, the strategy also had the effect of enhancing the school’s reputation as it demonstrated its ability to generate significant external funding, and building on nursing science.  

In recruiting faculty who would build on the science, Cowan emphasized areas in which there had not previously been a major presence at the school — or, for that matter, at most nursing schools. Cowan, whose own interest is in physiological nursing, brought a cadre of biologic nurse scientists and ultimately created four new strands of research for the doctoral program: biologic, biobehavioral, vulnerable populations, and health services. Led by Cowan, the school also built a reputation for its cardiovascular investigators, illustrated by a highly visible presence at American Heart Association meetings. 

While building on the school’s excellence, Cowan also found time to become a tireless advocate outside the school. “Marie was always very willing to travel,” says Vredevoe. “She would go to the professional meetings, the NIH and other places to build bridges for the school, and she became a national leader, which was good for the school’s recruitment and its visibility.”

Cowan also gave the school a greater presence on the UCLA campus. She became chair of an organization for the deans of all of the professional schools; in that role, she served as the deans’ representative at meetings involving UCLA’s senior administration, including the chancellor. “Marie changed the perception of nursing and put our school on the front-burner on the upper campus,” says Kay Baker, associate dean for student affairs at the school from 1995 to 2006. “She made sure people knew who we were, and soon everyone could see how strong our financial position was and they began asking what we were doing right.”

Dr. Albert Carnesale, who served as UCLA chancellor from 1997 to 2006, offers high praise for Cowan. “Under Marie Cowan’s leadership, the UCLA School of Nursing has achieved excellence in all aspects of the university’s mission: education, research, and service,” he says. “She has been an exemplary dean, and I am grateful for the opportunity to have had her as a colleague and friend.”

Cowan’s leadership and visibility on the campus and throughout California were major assets in her drive to reestablish the school’s undergraduate program. As the nursing shortage grew more severe, Cowan became a leading advocate for increasing the number of slots available for educating nurses at the university level. In numerous settings, she made the case for the urgent need to increase the number of nurses working at the bedside — preferably with at least a baccalaureate education — particularly in California, which has the second-lowest number of RNs per capita in the nation; and pointed out that California’s nursing programs were educating only about half of the RNs needed to meet the state’s growing demand. “She was relentless in pushing the theme that nursing is important and has a role in the university,” Vredevoe says, “and because she had maneuvered herself into strategic locations, she had a platform for making that argument.”

Before California Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger announced that he was making $2.75 million available to increase the capacity at California nursing schools, Cowan had lobbied and received state funding for the reinstatement of the school’s undergraduate program, which had suspended new admissions beginning in 1993. Even after convincing the state and campus leadership that the UCLA School of Nursing should play a key role in addressing the nursing shortage through a reinstated baccalaureate program and a new MBCN program, significant challenges remained. “The school had to develop and gain approval for new curricula, and had to increase its teaching capacity, particularly in ways that would provide the hands-on training needed for the new program’s students, who are on a track to become bedside nurses. To assist in teaching the basic clinical skills, Cowan formed partnerships with local hospitals — yet another way of enhancing the school’s visibility.”

No constituency has viewed the school’s rising prestige with more pride than alumni. Judy Bens- son, B.S. ’60, is among those who were particularly thrilled to see the reinstatement of the program that set them on their career course. “I have talked with many of my fellow students, and they all share my enthusiasm about the reopening of the undergraduate program,” she says. “Dean Cowan has done a stellar job of putting the School of Nursing in the forefront and keeping it right up there as an institution to be proud of.”

“The school has had so much success under Marie Cowan’s leadership,” says Rose Marie Nesbit, B.S. ’57. “She has elevated the school’s status on the campus, in the community, and across the country.”

“Dean Cowan has a national presence that draws your attention to UCLA. She is a renowned scholar and reaches out to those around her in the nursing community to assist in their research endeavors.”

— DR. JOYCE NEWMAN

UCLA Endowed Chair
Dr. Mary Woo was a relatively new faculty member at the UCLA School of Nursing in 1997 when Dr. Marie Cowan began her tenure as dean. Woo, who had been a student at the school for her master’s and doctoral training, says she was of a mindset that existed at many nursing schools, where research at the highest levels was considered an option, but not an expectation. That was about to change.

“When Marie came, she sat down with every faculty member to ask us how she could help with our research,” Woo recalls. “She made that the emphasis, but more than just talking about it, she actually sat down and was very hands-on. She would say, ‘Let’s map out your research trajectory — what are you going to do for the next five years?”'

Prior to that time, Woo concedes, she hadn’t been that productive or successful in putting out grant applications. She had received funding for a couple of small projects, but nothing on the federal level – considered the gold standard for university research. “Then, one day, Marie grabbed me and said, ‘There’s a federal funding op-

“The key to the success of a junior faculty member is having someone to utilize for support, guidance, and intellectual input. [Cowan] has taken many of us under her wing, but she also expects a lot.”

— DR. LORRAINE EVANGELISTA
portunity for a research training award through the NIH – we’re going to write it.’ I said, ‘But we only have two weeks, that’s impossible.’ She said, ‘No it’s not.’

Woo was placed under what she jokingly calls “house arrest.” On three occasions in the next two weeks, Cowan and several other faculty worked with her to fine-tune the grant application. Woo got the funding.

By then, she knew things would be different. “Before that, we were not a very research-intensive school,” she says. “When Marie Cowan came, she made the school into a national and international phenomenon in terms of its visibility and prestige, and she did that by making research the focal point. She brought a major emphasis on research productivity and external funding, as well as a national view of nursing education.”

Cowan has always been willing to sit down with faculty and offer concrete advice on how to improve grant proposals, says Woo, who credits the dean with providing both the push and the consultation that has led to Woo’s highly successful program in cardiovascular research. When Woo applied for an RO1 grant – considered the most prestigious offered by the National Institutes of Health – Cowan again offered assistance, and Woo received a nearly perfect score. “The only place where they criticized me was in an area where I didn’t follow Marie’s advice,” Woo says.

While she was helping the faculty who were at the school build their research programs, Cowan was also recruiting wisely. “She got individuals who already had strong research credentials, but she was also good at picking out younger faculty with strong research potential,” Woo says. Through these recruitments and by encouraging collaborations, research clusters were formed in areas such as cardiovascular nursing research, gerontological research, biobehavioral research, vulnerable populations, and health services.

In building the school into a research powerhouse, Cowan drew on her successful experience at the University of Washington School of Nursing, where she served as associate dean for research prior to coming to UCLA. “Marie exemplified collaborative research,” says Dr. Nancy Fugate Woods, that school’s dean. “She was a willing helper to any of us who wished to work with her. She searched for ways to support faculty research efforts and discovered that by framing help sessions as ‘remodeling parties,’ she could enhance success rates for grant funding. Soon she was asked to provide consultation to other schools on how to create a sense of camaraderie and supportive collegialship that produced the desired result.”

These gatherings, renamed “modeling parties” while Cowan was still at the University of Washington, became the norm at the UCLA School of Nursing. “You sit down with other investigators and go through your grant line by line, getting input and answering questions about the research,” says Woo, “and it increases your chances of getting funded by 150-300 percent.”

Cowan’s assistance wasn’t limited to junior faculty. Dr. Kathleen Dracup, who shared Cowan’s interest in cardiovascular nursing science, was already a well-established investigator when Cowan arrived at the school as dean. Dracup, who went on to become dean of the UC San Francisco School of Nursing, was the principal investigator and Cowan a co-investigator on an American Heart Association grant – a multicenter clinical trial of a heart failure exercise training program. “She was instrumental in our success in obtaining funding,” Dracup says of Cowan. “Despite being the dean and having many other responsibilities, she read every word of the proposal, made many suggestions and edits to clarify the purpose and methods, and was undoubtedly the reason we were successfully funded.”

But Cowan’s mentorship has particularly benefitted the less established investigators. “The key...
Even for faculty whose research is well outside the cardiovascular realm, Cowan has served as an important mentor. Dr. MarySue Heilemann smiles as she describes herself as having been a “challenge” for Cowan, in that her research expertise and perspective was more descriptive than quantitative, as was Cowan’s. After doing preliminary work focused on depressed women of Mexican descent, Heilemann was ready to apply for a larger grant to test an intervention that might make a difference in their lives. The research addresses an area of critical need: Among Latina women of Mexican descent, those born in the United States or who immigrated as children experience more depressive symptoms than those who were Mexico-born and immigrated as adults. But, despite higher rates of depression, even English-speakingLatinos with insurance coverage receive less mental health care than non-Latino whites.

Although Latino health was not Cowan’s expertise, she was able to steer Heilemann in a new direction. “She asked incisive, challenging questions about how I would do certain things and what difference it would make,” Heilemann recalls. “Researchers typically come in with complicated ideas and Marie is always very good at asking the basic questions about whether what we are doing is feasible, and whether the outcome will have any bearing on the people we are trying to help.”

After various discussions, Cowan persuaded Heilemann to pursue training in cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT), which Cowan had used successfully in previous research with cardiac patients. Heilemann then began to write an NIH grant proposal to test the feasibility of nurse-led, community-based CBT for low-income, second-generation women of Central American and Mexican descent who have depression.
Weilemann says she benefited greatly from modeling parties as she prepared her NIH grant application. “For a young scientist, it’s an unparalleled opportunity,” she says. “You’re sitting in the room with these other experts, and everyone has seen a copy of the grant proposal before you meet. It’s a mock grant review, just like they do at NIH, but with the author sitting right there. At the end of a two-hour meeting you feel like you’ve gotten 40-60 hours worth of work done.

Cowan always comes to the meetings fully prepared, Weilemann says, marking up her copy of the grant with questions. She also worked with Weilemann one-on-one — including one day when the two hammered out the details of the proposal in Cowan’s office from noon until approximately 10 p.m. The hard work paid off — Weilemann qualified for funding on the first submission, an unusual feat. She is now meeting the challenge of working with a subpopulation in great need of help.

Dr. Lynn Doering was an assistant professor when Cowan arrived at the school, and found herself uncertain about the direction for her research program. Doering was interested in addressing the issue of depression in patients following heart bypass surgery, and the relationship between immune dysfunction and depression. “Marie took me by the hand, got me focused and helped me choose a direction,” says Doering. “She really made time for me, which she didn’t have to do as a dean.”

Cowan’s investment paid off in a big way. Doering received funding from the NIH for a scientist development award, which assists investigators as they launch their research career in a new direction. Cowan then introduced Doering to key people at the Beck Institute, considered the premier center for cognitive behavioral therapy training and research. Doering went there for CBT training, as Weilemann later would. Using her new training and funding, Doering obtained pilot data that led her to apply for an ROI grant, again with Cowan’s assistance. She received funding, and has become a well-established researcher in her field.

“Without Marie, I wouldn’t have the research career I have,” says Doering. “Working with her was challenging and invigorating. It was a very iterative process — I would write, she would give me feedback, I would redo it, and we just kept going like that until the grant was complete.”

Through that process, Doering says, she formed a bond with Cowan that continues to this day. Cowan is now a co-investigator on Doering’s grant, and although Doering was recently promoted to a full professor, she still seeks Cowan’s advice on research matters and considers her to be her mentor.

“Marie is not only great at mentoring, she also loves doing it,” says Doering. “She will assist any faculty member who is willing to commit to the rigor of the process, which is very unusual for a dean. Marie has been instrumental in the development of my research program, and I was privileged that she became my mentor.”

“Dean Cowan is a leader whose vision is always present. She immediately responded to the call for more nurse leaders by authorizing development of the Masters Entry Clinical Nursing and undergraduate programs.”

— Dr. Angela Hudson
Assistant Professor

“Researchers typically come in with complicated ideas and Marie is always very good at asking the basic questions about whether what we are doing is feasible and whether the outcome will have any bearing on the people we are trying to help.”

— Dr. Mary Sue Weilemann
ADMINISTRATION
A Vision for the School – and the Leadership to Turn it into a Reality

When Dr. Marie Cowan began her tenure as dean of the UCLA School of Nursing in 1997, she brought her vision of a school that would rise to a greater level of national prominence, address workforce concerns of the nursing community locally and statewide, and gain in fiscal strength so that it could meet needs inside the school ranging from student scholarship support to infrastructure improvements. The new dean had a plan – and, those who worked closely with her say with admiration, the extraordinary leadership skills required to execute her ideas.

“Marie Cowan has an exceptional ability to accomplish the seemingly impossible as a result of her astute business sense, her visionary predictions of best programs, and her ability to motivate and engage the faculty in programmatic design and implementation,” observes Dr. Adey Nyamathi, professor and associate dean for academic affairs. As an example, Nyamathi points to the way in which Cowan involves faculty in strategic planning, making faculty leaders accountable for pathways to implementing new programs. “Success is only guaranteed by these strategies,” Nyamathi concludes.

“Marie has a vision for the future, and she’s going to get there,” agrees Dr. Lynn Doering, who has observed Cowan in action as a member of the Dean’s Advisory Committee and chair of the school’s Acute Care Section. “She has that drive that she can overcome people’s doubts or concerns about our ability to do something.”

Central to Cowan’s vision has been increasing access to graduate education for all students, including ethnically diverse populations, and leading the school in the design of innovative pre-licensure programs. She wasted no time in undertaking that effort, winning campus approval for the A.D.N.-B.S.-M.S.N. (“bridge”) program in 1998. This program, which was launched five years after the suspension of new admissions to the school’s undergraduate program, filled an important void. At a time when opportunities in advanced nursing practice are great, the majority of California’s nursing graduates are from associate degree programs; for these community nurses, pursuing an advanced degree in a nurse practitioner program requires a baccalaureate degree. The A.D.N.-B.S.-M.S.N. program provides a bridge: a one-year baccalaureate curriculum leading into the two-year master’s program. From four students in the first class, enrollment has most recently expanded to 32.

Other innovations included the development and implementation of an online program in nursing administration, which gained the approval of the Western Association of Schools and Colleges. Nyamathi notes that this was the first online program ever approved by the UC system, and has led to the
approval of online programs in other disciplines on the UCLA campus.

Cowan also reshaped the existing programs to meet nursing needs. The establishment of a bioscience strand to the Ph.D. program was noteworthy given that only about 15 percent of the nation’s nurse scientists are biological researchers. Cowan hired several biologically oriented faculty and provided extensive mentoring as they launched their research careers. Not coincidentally, these faculty all currently have RO1 grants, the most sought-after research funding given by the National Institutes of Health.

Diversity and cultural competence have also been major goals, as the school seeks to educate nurses who can effectively meet the health needs of what is arguably the nation’s most diverse city. The school has among the most diverse student populations at UCLA, along with a large amount of faculty research focusing on the health needs of diverse patient communities. A Multicultural Committee, open to students, faculty and interested alumni and community members, was recently established to address a wide variety of diversity-related issues.

Nyamathi notes that with California ranking 49th out of the 50 states in number of RNs per 100,000 population, the recent reinstatement of the school’s undergraduate nursing program and the establishment of the Masters Entry Clinical Nurse (MECN) program – which takes non-nurses who have already completed undergraduate studies in other fields and prepares them for eventual nursing leadership roles – stand as major achievements in addressing a pressing societal issue affecting nursing education. The two pre-licensure programs will increase the school’s enrollment by 200 annually, supplying well-educated bedside nurses to community tertiary hospitals.

“Marie understood all of the nursing-shortage issues and was very vocal – on our campus, to the UC Office of the President, and to state policymakers – about the need for these programs to be offered by the University of California,” says Kay Baker, who served as associate dean for student affairs from 1995 to 2006.

In starting the new programs, Cowan spearheaded a unique model in which the school forged partnerships with major hospitals in Los Angeles to assist in the clinical education of the pre-licensure students. Approximately 10 institutions and 30 clinical faculty are taking part, enabling the students to be paired with nursing professionals for hands-on learning experiences in health care settings throughout the city.

Cowan was also committed to starting the new programs on sound financial footing by not trying to do more than the school could afford. In this, as in all areas involving the school’s spending, she has played an active role in fiscal planning. Susan Pfeiffer, a member of the school’s administrative staff who helps to prepare the annual budget, has worked in many departments and schools on the UCLA campus but says she has never seen a dean or department head who understands fiscal matters the way Cowan does. “She really knows how to prepare a budget,” Pfeiffer says. “She knows all of the faculty, staff and student needs, and the various types of funds within the university. You’ve heard it said that someone can work a penny until it squeaks? She makes it scream.” As a result, Pfeiffer says, the school is one of the only units on campus that is working with a financial reserve. Thus, in addition to providing unprecedented levels of student scholarship support, the school has been able to address its infrastructure needs.

“Marie has made it her business to make sure we have one of the healthiest bottom-lines on campus, to ensure that the school has a sound future,” says Doering. “That’s not easy to do, because there are so many competing demands and it’s getting harder all the time. But this is another example in which she has not delegated the task – she is hands-on.”

“Dr Cowan was instrumental in bringing me to the school. Since I was a doctoral student and participated on the search committee that brought her to UCLA, I feel her actions in bringing me back were a bit of destiny.”

– DR. BARBARA BATES-JENSEN
Assistant Professor
Mady Stovall was only one year into the UCLA School of Nursing’s A.D.N.-B.S.-M.S.N. (“bridge”) program when she was prodded by Dean Marie Cowan to set her sights at the highest level of graduate nursing education.

“Even at the time I was graduating with my baccalaureate degree, Dean Cowan was saying, ‘I hope you’re thinking about the doctoral program,’” Stovall recalls, smiling. “She did it in a gentle, encouraging way, but I could tell she was very excited talking with me about it. I said, ‘OK, Dean Cowan, give me a little time, let me get through my master’s degree first and I’ll think about it.’ When I finished my master’s two years later, she was at it again – ‘I hope you’re applying to the doctoral program!’”

That was June of 2004, and Stovall did decide to pick up a doctoral application packet, mostly to peruse the curriculum. “Somehow, Dean Cowan got wind of this, and the next time she saw me in the hallway she was literally jumping up and down and saying, ‘I’m so excited!’” Stovall recalls. “I told her I needed a little more time – that I wanted to work and get my feet wet. She said, ‘I understand, but you’re going to come back to us, I know you will.’”

As far back as 1995, when Stovall received her associate degree, she had told some of her classmates and professors that one day she would get her Ph.D. Cowan knew from talking with Stovall that she was intrigued by the opportunity to make a difference in the lives of nurses and their patients through...
The bridge program is a marvelous way to bring nurses who haven’t had the advantage of a bachelor of science degree to a more professional level of nursing,” says Peter Anderson, who was part of the program’s first graduating class.

Today, Anderson is a nurse practitioner in partnership with a physician in a private practice in which they manage approximately 500 HIV patients and oversee clinical trials of HIV therapies for nearly 20 patients. He left a successful business career to pursue what he saw as a more fulfilling career in nursing, and has never regretted the decision. “Getting to spend time at the School of Nursing, where we had complete access to all of the faculty in a very intimate setting, was a life-changing experience,” Anderson says. “If I hadn’t done that, I wouldn’t be the same professional I am today.”

As subsequent students who have gone through the UCLA School of Nursing’s programs have found, it is not just the faculty that is accessible. “Marie has always been very visible – every student knows her, which is not the case at many schools,” says Kay Baker, the school’s former associate dean for student affairs. “At orientations, she

The re-opening of the undergraduate nursing program was made possible by the multi-faceted leadership of Dean Cowan. She painstakingly worked out every detail, from budget to curriculum to legislative reviews.”

— Bryant Ng, Assistant Dean for Administration

Stovall is one of countless students who have benefited from the school and its programs during Cowan’s tenure as dean. Among the most grateful are those who, like Stovall, were afforded an opportunity to move into advanced nursing practice by the bridge program – established shortly after Cowan’s arrival to provide a route for associate-degree nurses to earn a baccalaureate and master’s degree in three years. With the recent reinstatement of the school’s undergraduate program and the new Masters Entry Clinical Nurse program, two new populations of future nurses will also have Cowan and the school to thank.

Maurie Maitland was drawn to the bridge program from Vancouver by the prospect of getting her master’s degree in three years and the financial support that would be available to enable her to make the move. “I was able to go from working at the bedside to getting a master’s in nursing administration and moving into a completely different position,” says Maitland, who graduated in June and is now a magnet coordinator at Torrance Memorial Medical Center. “So many doors were opened, because the school is so connected in the community. I had numerous job opportunities waiting for me as soon as I graduated.”

research. Cowan’s persistence ultimately paid off. Last spring, Stovall, who had been working as an acute care nurse practitioner in the UCLA Neuro-Oncology Program, decided the time was right, and filled out an application. She is now enrolled as a first-year doctoral student. “I’m really excited,” says Stovall, who hopes to contribute nursing research knowledge that can benefit the Neuro-Oncology Program’s brain tumor patients, “and it is because of Dean Cowan’s encouragement and support through the years that I was confident enough to move forward.”

“The re-opening of the undergraduate nursing program was made possible by the multi-faceted leadership of Dean Cowan. She painstakingly worked out every detail, from budget to curriculum to legislative reviews.”

— Bryant Ng, Assistant Dean for Administration
will lead the UCLA eight-clap. She will go into classes. Any student who wants to see her can just make an appointment. She will sit down with students and be very willing to listen to their concerns.”

“I interacted very closely with the dean, and she was always extremely supportive of what was in the best interest of students,” says Sarah Miller, who served as president of the Graduate Students in Nursing Association before her graduation from the Acute Care Nurse Practitioner/Clinical Nurse Specialist dual certification program in 2005. Miller, who is now an acute care nurse practitioner in UCLA’s Division of Cardiothoracic Surgery, says Cowan was “constantly looking for new ways to help students, faculty and alumni excel, become leaders, and experience personal growth.”

“For many students, the most pressing need is financial support, and Cowan made scholarship funding a top priority. “She believes there is no financial reason someone should not be able to come to the school, and she is always looking for a solution that can help students who are struggling financially,” says Miller. Many students have family concerns that make attending graduate school an economic hardship, Miller notes; the scholarship support is vital to their ability to put aside these concerns and focus on academics.

“Beyond her support of students’ needs, Miller sees Cowan as an inspirational role model. “She is an outstanding leader who is extremely driven,” Miller says. “Her drive alone makes you want to be someone in the community of nursing.”

“I have been part of a lot of good institutions in my life, but I have never felt the loyalty or pride of being associated with any place more than the UCLA School of Nursing,” says Anderson, who continues to play an active role as an alumnus. “The school has grown by leaps and bounds since I started, and it just keeps getting better and better.”

“Marie has always been very visible – every student knows her, which is not the case at many schools. She will sit down with students and be very willing to listen to their concerns.”

— KAY BAKER

Administrative Specialist

“My position in Development was my first working relationship with the dean. Through the many conversations we had, what I found impressive was her strength, in particular her understanding of the health issues and eventual passing of my mother.”

CLAIR TYLER

Administrative Specialist

REMODELED STUDENT LOUNGE OPENS – The school held a ribbon-cutting ceremony October 3 to rededicate the Alumni Student Lounge, located on the second floor of the Factor Building. In 2005, the Graduate Students in Nursing (GNSA) board expressed a desire to contribute to the renovation of the lounge (which had been established in 1981 by the School of Nursing Alumni Association) and raised $7,000 from students, faculty, staff and alumni, an amount that was matched by Dean Marie Cowan.

“MynpositionninnDevelopmentnwasnmyfirstnworkingnrelationshipnwithnthendean–nThroughnthenmanynconversationsnwenhadznwhatnInfoundnimpressivenwasonhnherstrengthzninnparticularnimherunderstandingnofnthenhealthnissuesnandneventualnpassingnofnmymother–”

— CARLeTYLER

AdministrativeeSpecialist
**PARTING WORDS**

**Excerpts from speeches at Commencement, Spring 2007**

**ERIC GALLARDO**
Representing the ADN-B.S.-M.S.N. Class

The students that make up this year’s Bridge Program come from a variety of backgrounds, differing in age and clinical experience. Coming from many ethnicities and cultures, this diverse group has one common element: We all share the same interest in higher education.

We have come to know each other very well, forming bonds which we hope will last a lifetime. The bridge students’ passion for nursing has increased immensely during this time, and many of us are now looking at nursing issues from a different perspective.

As today’s nursing evolves from past practice to evidence-based practice, we are reminded that we cannot be limited by doing what’s always been done. Examples of solutions that were “outside the box” include introducing farmers’ markets and mobile health clinics into lower socioeconomic communities.

During this time we have renewed our need to make a difference in the nursing profession. We look forward to developing new competencies, greater knowledge, and becoming even more confident.

**AMY COLON**
Representing the M.S.N. Class

As I stand here today, I look at you, remembering your faces on the first day of class. The faces I see now are more knowledgeable and confident, faces I trust to manage the health care of today and tomorrow.

I was trying to think of what I admired most about my peers, my graduate faculty, or my clinical preceptors. The most valuable thing I learned about being a master-prepared advanced practice nurse were not limited to the pathophysiology, the research, or the pharos, but how to put it all together – the “how-to” of advanced practice.

To these students in administration, I look forward to collaborating with you in practice to make our health care organizations run smoothly and efficiently. To those in direct patient care, I look forward to being a part of a multidisciplinary team spanning the outpatient and inpatient settings, to provide a partnership of excellence and continuity of care.

We will be blazing trails together, following in footsteps of great nurse leaders while becoming nurse leaders ourselves.

**SHERRI MENDELSON**
Representing the Ph.D. Class

I am here to represent 10 nurses who have completed the requirements for the Doctor of Philosophy degree in Nursing.

In this extraordinary pathway to the future, we have renewed our pledge today to promote health and prevent disease, at a time when there are extraordinary breakthroughs. And yet, with all of these breakthroughs come some questions that all of us, and particularly we graduates, will have to address.

We are the ones who must ensure that above all, the health of our patients will be our first concern. And we will need our voices to ensure that what we know, what we see, what we experience, cannot be ignored as our nation debates directions in health care.

We were provided with a unique opportunity here at UCLA not only to study nursing, but to expand our horizons within other fields that can inform our nursing practice. We must have a responsibility to stay informed, continue our development of nursing research, and become advocates for nursing and all of the beneficial health outcomes that nurses produce.

**AMY COLON**

**SHERRI MENDELSON**

**ERIC GALLARDO**

**NANCY FUGATE WOODS**

Dr. Nancy Fugate Woods, dean of the University of Washington School of Nursing, delivered the keynote address at the UCLA School of Nursing Commencement ceremony in June. Telling graduates: “I believe it is time for us to ask the more difficult questions: What are the health care needs we are trying to meet? And what is the best way to deliver the services people need? These questions will challenge our current notions of how to care for people. They will prompt us to redefine ways that we deliver services to people and who we need to help us in this mission. The answers to these questions will point with laser-sharp focus to the kinds of practice that really require a nurse, the kind of educational preparation nurses need, and the types of practice that really make a difference in the population’s health.”
DEAN MARIE J. COWAN ENDOURED SCHOLARSHIP FUND IS ESTABLISTED TO HELP STUDENTS

With Dean Marie Cowan announcing her intent to step down June 30, 2008, the school has shifted to a season of celebration of her decade of success as its leader. Cowan has always held raising funds for scholarships to support the school’s students as her number-one priority, so to celebrate her deanship and honor her commitment to students, an endowed scholarship is being established in her honor. Anyone interested in joining in the celebration may contribute a gift designated to the Dean Marie J. Cowan Endowed Scholarship Fund. Checks should be made out to The UCLA Foundation and forwarded to: UCLA School of Nursing, Development Office, Endowed Scholarship Fund, P.O. Box 951702, Los Angeles, CA 90095.

Please contact Rene Dennis with any inquiries at (310) 206-3662 or via email: rdennis@support.ucla.edu. Your gift will help to recognize a decade of commitment to the success of the UCLA School of Nursing.

CONTINUING THE FAMILY LEGACY

Sabrina Matoff-Stepp and her husband John (inset) have established a scholarship fund in memory of her mother, Dianne Matoff (above right). The Stepp family has pledged a five-year commitment to provide scholarship support to students enrolled in the undergraduate program. In 1987, Sabrina’s father, Richard Matoff (above left), established the Dianne Matoff Endowed Research Mentorship fund to enhance research for nurse practitioners, as well as research for oncology and cardiovascular nursing.

THE CHIRONIAN SOCIETY

The membership in The Chironian Society for the inaugural year yielded a roster of 18 alumni members at all three levels. The school is grateful to those alumni and looks forward to increased membership in 2007-08. The focus of The Chironian Society is to enhance the student experience and provide scholarships. The school will look to the society as the alumni fund-raising arm, with annual renewal memberships that enable the school to forecast its ability to distribute scholarships each year.

Membership in The Chironian Society is available at the following annual levels:

- Dean’s Honor Roll $1,000
- Patron Member $500
- Regular Member $200

Pledges are accepted for annual memberships (to be realized within the fiscal year).

As a Chironian, you will receive an acknowledgement of your membership and invitations to UCLA School of Nursing events. You will also be invited to participate in various volunteering opportunities and, at the appropriate giving level, be listed in the UCLA School of Nursing Honor Roll.

As a member of The Chironian Society, you will be investing not only in the school, but also in the future of nursing professionals for years to come.

We invite your membership. You may contact Rene Dennis, Development Officer, at (310) 206-3662 and/or visit www.nursing.ucla.edu.

CLASS REUNION

The class of ’57 celebrated its 50th class reunion on the Monarch of the Seas cruise ship and sailed to Mexico. Eleven classmates gathered to remember their time at UCLA and catch up on life’s journey. On October 11, the “Late Bloomers,” as they are affectionately called, presented Dean Marie Cowan with a class gift of $4,650 to kick off a campaign for the Dean Marie J. Cowan Endowed Scholarship Fund in her honor.
IN MEMORIAM

The school mourns the loss of Phyllis Ann Paxton, a former faculty member who was appointed assistant professor in 1970 and served on the Minority Affairs Committee, developing and implementing a recruitment and retention program to increase the number of individuals of color graduating from the school. She co-authored a nursing textbook entitled Providing Safe Nursing Care for Ethnic People of Color, which was listed in the top 10 nursing textbooks in 1976 by the American Nurses Association. She later joined John Wesley Community Hospital Institute, Inc., where she served as executive director for 13 years. Phyllis passed away on September 25, and her family celebrated her life and many paid tribute to her contributions on October 2.

The class of ’58 lost Mary Crippen, who passed away April 7. Her family and friends celebrated her life on April 22, displaying a 1954 newspaper article that highlighted Mary receiving a scholarship to attend the UCLA School of Nursing. Mary’s fellow members of the Red Hat Grannys were also in attendance to pay tribute to her life.

BEQUEST TO THE SCHOOL OF NURSING

The school was notified of two gifts designated for financial support for students. The Sarah Brenessel Trust gift will be designated for scholarships to students in the newly established Masters Entry Clinical Nurse (MECN) program. Sarah Brenessel, who passed away in November 2005, was a graduate of the undergraduate class of ’52 and of the master’s program in 1960.

Lydia Parker was not an alumnus, but a donor and friend to the school. She passed away in June. Her estate left an annuity for student support and the dean has designated her gift to support students in the undergraduate program.

SCHOOL OF NURSING ALUMNI ASSOCIATION BOARD

Dean Marie Cowan has seated a new alumni executive board that will lead the efforts to engage the alumni with the school. The mission of the alumni leadership group is to promote and advance the interests of the School of Nursing at UCLA through activities that enhance its professional, social and economic development. It will also provide interaction among faculty, alumni and students that fosters pride in the school. The executive board members are: President, Sarah Miller ’05; President-elect, Peter G. Anderson ’99, ’01; Vice President, Jackie Masih ’07; Treasurer, Mincin Gomez ’06; Secretary, Mady Stovall ’02, ’04; and Membership Chair, Maurie Maitland ’04, ’06. The alumni board can be contacted at uclasonalumni@yahoo.com.

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THE CHRIONIAN SOCIETY

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Katharine Baker, M.N. ’78
Rochelle Brucker, B.S. ’57
Margaret Caulkins, B.S. ’49, M.S. ’56
Mary Clausen, B.S. ’56
Myra Clevy, M.S.N. ’05
Kathleen Dracup, M.N. ’74
Isabel Fitzgerald, M.A. ’73
Ann Ivey, B.S. ’52, M.S. ’64
Helen Kee, M.S. ’58
Carrie McDavid, B.S. ’73
Rose Marie Nesbit, B.S. ’57
Carol Parente, M.N. ’95
Jane Ryan, M.N. ’72
Carol Schwab, B.S. ’60
Elise Studer, M.S. ’65
Esther Wolloch, M.N. ’72
Syd Whalley, M.N. ’80

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Peter Anderson, B.S. ’99, M.S.N. ’01
President-elect
Jacqueline Masih, M.S.N. ’07
Vice President
Mincin Gomez, M.S.N. ’06
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Mady Stovall, B.S. ’02, M.A.N. ’04
Secretary
Maurie Maitland, B.S., ’04, M.S.N. ’06
Membership Chair

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Pat Beckman, R.N., M.N.
Terry Bream, B.S. ’67, M.N. ’72
Heidi Crooks, R.N., M.A.
Barbara Bromson Gray, B.S. ’77, M.N. ’81
Kathleen Hunt, B.S. ’56, M.S.
Ann Ivey, B.S. ’57, M.S. ’64
Rose Marie Nesbit, B.S. ’57
Kathleen Torres, B.S.N., M.P.H.
Syd Whalley, B.S.N., M.N. ’80

UCLA NURSING 21
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Roger and Judith Benson
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Jumpei Watanabe Memorial Foundation

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The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation

$25,000-$49,999
Jan Nash and Elizabeth Reznick
National Student Nurses’ Association

$10,000-$24,999
American Cancer Society
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* Gifts received July 1, 2006 to June 30, 2007
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It is important to us that we acknowledge you properly. If an error has been made in the listing of your name or gift, please contact Rene Dennis at 1-310-206-3662 or email rdennis@support.ucla.edu

UCLA NURSING 20
**DID YOU KNOW?**

- Named student scholarships and endowments can be established based on funding amounts. Endowed scholarships can be established for a minimum of $50,000. Endowed graduate fellowships can be established for a minimum of $100,000. The UCLA School of Nursing appreciates contributions in any amount.
- You can make a gift to the UCLA School of Nursing that will provide income for your lifetime as well as an immediate income tax charitable deduction.
- If you are 75 years of age, you can establish a charitable gift annuity that has a 7.1% payout rate that will continue for your lifetime. The older you are the higher the payout rate.
- You can make a gift of your home, receive an immediate income tax charitable deduction and continue to live there for your lifetime.
- Bequests are a significant source of support for the School of Nursing.

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For more information, please call Rene Dennis at (310) 206-3662 or visit www.giftplanning.ucla.edu

**COMING SOON...**

SON Alumni eNewsletter will be sent via email to SON Alumni Association members. If you need to update your email address or have an item to include in the newsletter, send information to: uclasonalumni@yahoo.com.