THE SCHOOL WELCOMES OUR NEW DEAN

DR. COURTNEY H. LYDER

professor
researcher
nurse practitioner
advocate
leader
MESSAGE FROM THE DEAN

I have been thinking about one of my favorite poems, “On the Pulse of Morning” by Maya Angelou. This poem was written specifically for the first inauguration of our 42nd president, William Jefferson Clinton. It speaks of a renewed America full of hope and dreams for all of its inhabitants. In many ways, this is my inaugural address to you as the sixth dean of the UCLA School of Nursing.

Colleagues from around the country have asked me, Why the deanship at the UCLA School of Nursing? The answer to this question is quite easy. Thanks to the hard work of my predecessors, including, most recently, Dean Marie J. Cowan and Interim Dean Adeline Nyamathi, the UCLA School of Nursing has sustained a national reputation for education excellence. This reputation comes from the rigorous academic and research programs led by our world-class faculty. Our students are intellectually gifted and have a true sense of social justice. They understand that nursing has the power to not only transform the life of a patient, but to transform the world.

In my brief tenure at UCLA, I have met some outstanding alumni. They have shared with me their educational experiences in and out of the classrooms. They have also shared with me the respect and love that they have for the school, medical center and city of Los Angeles, with its rich diversity. Most importantly, they have shared with me how UCLA has transformed their lives.

In this edition and in future issues of the magazine, you will read some of the amazing stories that have been told to me by the school’s faculty, staff, students, alumni, and friends on how we make a profound difference in the world. It’s not just our uncompromised excellence, but also our deep concern for giving voice to the voiceless. Our faculty and students take pride in asking research and clinical questions that go beyond the status quo. They also work with populations that may be forgotten by the general public, but not to us at UCLA. Our award-winning Center for Vulnerable Populations Research serves as one real example of how our faculty not only conducts participatory research, but also provides care for our increasing homeless population.

As you may be aware, the federal as well as most state governments have been reexamining their budgets. Unfortunately, California is no different. Thus, by press time of this publication, we will have learned the impact of the proposed budget cuts to our School of Nursing. I am committed to maintaining all of our current educational and research programs. However, I have challenged the faculty and staff to explore alternate sources of funding to maintain the nursing excellence that we have enjoyed for nearly 60 years. Now more than ever, we will need to look to philanthropy to help bridge the gap that will be left by our decreasing state support. This comes at an inopportune time, when both California and the nation need nurses more than ever.

One method we will use to close the potential budget gap is to seek new collaborations with the City of Los Angeles, the state, the nation and key international partners. I plan to strengthen our relationships with existing partners as well. One significant partner is the Ronald Reagan UCLA Medical Center. As evidence of the strengthening of our school’s relationship with the medical center, I have been recently appointed as the first assistant director for academic nursing. Conversely, the senior associate director for patient care services, Heidi Crooks, has been appointed an assistant dean in the School of Nursing. These dual appointments will help both of us work more closely to not only align our educational and clinical programs, but also to forge new opportunities for collaboration that benefits the nursing enterprise.

I believe nursing is truly one of the most noble and optimistic professions. We provide safe and effective care. We seek answers to questions few have ever thought to ask, but that are vitally essential to the populations that we serve. There is a palpable excitement at the UCLA School of Nursing. We believe that on the pulse of morning, “together we aspire, together we shall achieve.” On the pulse of morning, all is possible and all is in our reach!
PARTING WORDS
Excerpts from Speeches at Commencement, Spring 2008

PROFESSOR. RESEARCHER. NURSE PRACTITIONER. ADVOCATE. LEADER.
New Dean Courtney H. Lyder Brings a Passion for Nursing and a Commitment to Guiding the School to Even Greater Heights

OPPORTUNITIES AT THE UCLA SCHOOL OF NURSING

PURSUING A DREAM: NEW STUDENTS REFLECT ON THE JOURNEY
Five Students, One for Each of the School’s Degree Programs, Discuss What Brought Them to the UCLA School of Nursing

FOSTERING WISDOM ABOUT SOCIETY’S ELDERS
The School’s New Center for the Advancement of Gerontological Nursing Science Tackles Key Aging Issues

DEVELOPMENT AND NEWS

SCHOOL OF NURSING ANNUAL GIVING

UCLA School of Nursing is published by the UCLA School of Nursing for the alumni, faculty, students, staff and friends of the school.

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PARTING WORDS
Excerpts from Speeches at Commencement, Spring 2008

JULI MCGINNIS
Representing the A.D.N.-B.S.-M.S.N.
“Bridge” Class
Webster’s defines Bridge as “a transitional passage connecting two points.” The Bridge experience has been an eye-opener. Our nursing and other UCLA professors light the path of possibilities that only knowledge and commitment can obtain. We have been empowered by the lessons that education, perseverance, and compassion can make a difference.

Today we are two-thirds of the way through our transition. Our experiences have challenged us and expanded our vision. We possess a broader understanding of our surroundings and hold a finer focus on our aspirations. As Bridge students we vary in age, gender, background, ethnicity, and beliefs...yet we are forever bonded by our shared experiences and the primary glue which connects all students here today...the art, science, and dedication to the dynamic, caring profession of nursing.

LUIS SANDOVAL
Representing the Masters Entry Clinical Nurse (M.E.C.N.) Class
Oh, the accomplishments – the fruits of the sacrifices and endless hours of study and clinical time that we endured as we struggled our way through the rigorous two-year program. We M.E.C.N. graduates are a unique breed of student, having demonstrated determination and tenacity. Some classmates have held jobs. Many have started the program with children and some have even given birth to children during the program. Our rigorous studies required enormous concentration and dedication. The fact that we are all graduating today, fully prepared to be licensed professionals, is an amazing accomplishment.

The program’s challenges were numerous and undeniable, but we confronted them with focus and determination. It has been a blessing to receive our training from one of the most prestigious nursing programs in the country! To have received a leadership component coupled with clinical knowledge is truly invaluable.

ERIN SACKETT
Representing the M.S.N.
(Advanced Practice) Class
To become an advanced practice nurse takes fortitude and determination. We gained new experience, new knowledge, and a new understanding of the word fatigue. We trudged through our classes and came to embrace a new holiday known as “comps”...or, as we like to think of it, the celebration of insanity.

How did we do it? We put one foot in front of the other. We looked toward those who had come before us, and we reached a hand back to those who follow. We thanked ourselves for making it through just one more quarter, just one more month, just one more week to finish our sojourn. Finally, we revel in this time of reminiscence, knowing that we share in the common bond of every past and future graduate of the UCLA School of Nursing. We are carrying on the legacy of the students who have come before us.

DR. JOAN L. F. SHEEVER, professor and dean of the University of Illinois-Chicago College of Nursing, delivered the keynote address at the UCLA School of Nursing Commencement ceremony in June. She told graduating students of five “success lessons” offered by her close friend and colleague, the late Dean Marie Cowan:

1. Continually scan your environment for opportunities and, if blocked, seize new alternatives but never give up your
goals or dreams. 2. Seek good mentors, build your teams and seek to be on the leading edge of positive professional change. 3. Share your expertise – be a mentor and celebrate everyone’s success, not just your own. 4. Work hard but have fun. Laugh at yourself so others will laugh with you. 5. Hang on to your passion and courage in the face of all odds – it fuels your hopes and dreams.”

**FACTOR HONORS**

Dr. Lynn Doering received the Council on Cardiovascular Nursing’s 2008 Best Abstract Award at the American Heart Association’s Scientific Sessions 2008 in New Orleans, for the abstract, “Comorbid Anxiety and Depression: The Dynamic Duo of Death.”

Dr. Deborah Konak-Griffin received the 2008 Award of Excellence in Research from the Association of Women’s Health, Obstetric & Neonatal Nursing.

Dr. Mary Ann Lewis and Colleen Keenan have been awarded a three-year Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) grant for work with underserved populations.

Dr. Joyce Newman-Giger was one of 10 people inducted in the Institute of Excellence for the National Black Nurses Association.

Dr. Linda Phillips was awarded funding by the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) to provide supplemental gerontology education and activities for doctoral students in the adult health specialties.

Dr. Dorothy Wiley was named a Grossmont College Walk of Fame Inductee by the California State Assembly.

Dr. Mary Woo has been accepted as a peer reviewer for the National Institutes of Health from July 1, 2008 to June 30, 2012. Woo will serve as a member of the Nursing Science Adults and Older Adults Study Section’s Center for Scientific Review.

Dr. Kynna Wright-Volel has received a Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Nurse Faculty Scholar Award.

**SCHOLARSHIP AWARDS**

The Ralph Parsons Foundation has awarded the UCLA School of Nursing $200,000 over a two-year period for a fellowship program. The program will give current graduate nursing students in the school’s Family Nurse Practitioner Program the opportunity to specialize in caring for the underserved – specifically those populations served by the UCLA School of Nursing Health Clinic at the Union Rescue Mission in Downtown Los Angeles. Dr. Colleen Keenan and Dean Courtney H. Lyder head the program, and successful applicants will serve as Parsons Fellows.

The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF) and the American Association of Colleges of Nursing announced that the UCLA School of Nursing will be one of 58 schools of nursing to receive funding through the RWJF New Careers in Nursing Scholarship Program, which aims to strengthen the nation’s pipeline of new nurses by providing financial aid to students who enroll in fast-track nursing degree programs. Scholarships of $10,000 each will be awarded to 706 nursing students in accelerated programs during 2008-2009.

**ALUMNI AND STUDENT HONORS**

Valisa Saunders, ’81, ’83, a certified gerontological nurse practitioner at Kaiser Permanente Hawaii, received the “Clinician of the Year” award from the American Geriatrics Society.

UCLA School of Nursing undergraduate student Lindsay Williams was one of 10 winners of the 2008 Cherokee “A Nurse I Am” scholarship sponsored by Cherokee Uniforms. Scholarship winners each received $2,000 toward defraying the cost of their nursing education. Williams’ selection was based on an essay she wrote in response to the inspirational film “A Nurse I Am.”
Including all that Dr. Courtney H. Lyder brings to UCLA in a single sentence is as daunting a task as trying to keep up with the boundless supply of energy and enthusiasm exuded by the personable New School of Nursing dean—so we won’t try.

He is a prominent and prolific researcher on issues related to health care for older adults. In his career, Lyder has been principal investigator or co-investigator on research and training grants totaling nearly $12 million, with more than 165 books, book chapters, articles and abstracts to his name and more than 500 lectures delivered throughout the United States and abroad. His work as both a scholar and a consultant to the government and the nursing home industry has had a major effect on policy. He is a leading advocate for health care diversity, and is a Fellow of the American Academy of Nursing—the second-youngest member ever inducted. Indeed, he’s just getting started: At the age of 42, Lyder is among a select group of only 3 percent of U.S. nursing deans under age 45.

Did we mention energy? Enthusiasm?

When he began serving as professor and dean of the UCLA School of Nursing August 1 after a stint as an endowed professor and department chair at the University of Virginia, Lyder also broke new ground as the first African American male to lead a U.S. nursing school.

“It took a university like UCLA to shatter some serious stereotypes about nursing and put me in the dean’s suite,” he says. “Leading a school of this caliber is both a humbling honor and a dream come true.”

“We are so pleased to have Dr. Lyder join the UCLA community and take the helm of our highly regarded School of Nursing,” says Chancellor Gene D. Block. “He has proven to be an outstanding leader, particularly in promoting diversity and in translating scholarly work into clinical practice. We look forward to working with him to continue the innovation for which UCLA nursing is known and the academic excellence that characterizes our university campus-wide.”
“It took a university like UCLA to shatter some serious stereotypes about nursing and put me in the dean’s suite. Leading a school of this caliber is both a humbling honor and a dream come true.”
Lyder comes to UCLA from the University of Virginia, where he was recruited from Yale University in 2003 to serve as an endowed chair of nursing and a professor of internal medicine and geriatrics. He headed the School of Nursing’s acute and specialty care department, where he oversaw curriculum for 25 full-time and 22 part-time faculty members. He also designed and directed the school’s geriatric nurse practitioner program, and spearheaded diversity initiatives for the health sciences. Between 1994 and 2003, Lyder served on the faculty at Yale’s School of Nursing, where he directed a number of programs specializing in adult, family, women’s health and elder care, and was the first sitting minority faculty member to earn tenure at the school.

His interest in the health and welfare of older adults dates back as far as he can remember. Born in Port of Spain in the West Indies, Lyder was 5 years old when his family moved from Trinidad and Tobago to New York City. Growing up he spent considerable time with his grandparents and other older adults. “They always seemed so wise, which made me want to absorb as much knowledge and wisdom from them as I could,” Lyder recalls. “It was a natural fit that I would work with this population in my career.”

As an undergraduate at Beloit College in Wisconsin, Lyder’s plan was to go into geropsychology. But at the time, there was a glut of clinical psychologists. As Lyder neared completion of his B.A., his psychology advisor told him about a new cooperative agreement between Beloit College and Rush University College of Nursing in Chicago. “I had never thought about it, but I knew nursing to be one of the noblest professions, and also that it was so portable,” Lyder recalls. “There was a nursing shortage, and I decided this aligned with what I wanted to do.”

Lyder’s first quarter at Rush, he was captivated by a lecture on the art and science of skin care. At the end of the lecture, the professor told the students she had just gotten significant funding from the National Institutes of Health for research to validate the Braden Scale — a then-new method for predicting the risk of pressure ulcers (also known as bedsores) — and needed research assistants. Lyder was quick to volunteer, and he soon realized he had found his calling. He would go on to get his B.S., M.S., and N.D. from Rush University. Barbara Braden, whose scale continues to be widely used in the United States and abroad, would become one of his mentors.

The population of older adults is expanding rapidly, and with the first baby boomers approaching retirement age, the rate of growth is expected to accelerate. Yet, Lyder notes, there is a dearth of nurses prepared to optimally care for older adults. As a result, mistakes are often made that expose the population to preventable risks. “Too often, we try to treat older adults like adults, to the detriment of patient safety,” he asserts.

Lyder points to the example of medications. Older patients tend to metabolize drugs differently than adults, so prescribing similar doses can lead to over-sedation, putting them at greater risk for falls. In addition, many older adults are on multiple medications, with their health care providers having little knowledge about how the drugs interact with each other. “In a sense it’s like a big experiment that’s being done on these patients,” he says. “One of the nice things about geriatric nursing is that we can begin to methodically take patients off medications that they don’t need and improve their quality of life.”

“One of the biggest safety issues for older adults has been Lyder’s main area of focus within geriatric nursing: the prevention and treatment of pressure ulcers, a major national problem, particularly in the nursing home industry. Nearly one in four long-term care residents develop pressure ulcers, leading to considerable suffering, decline and, in an estimated 60,000 cases each year, fatal complications. Research by Lyder and other leaders in the field suggests that the majority of pressure ulcers are preventable. “When you look at the interventions that can prevent them — tuning the patients on a regular basis, keeping them dry, making sure they are getting a nutritionally sound diet — they all come from basic nursing,” Lyder notes.

Lyder’s research and advocacy have played a central role in shaping federal policies related to elder care and improving the safety of older adults in hospitals and long-term care facilities. He has served as a senior consultant to the U.S. Depart-
ment of Health and Human Services and as president of the National Pressure Ulcer Advisory Panel. With funding from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, he co-directed an investigation to identify hospital errors affecting the Medicare population, specifically looking at the incidence of pressure ulcers. His findings influenced the government’s recent decision to stop reimbursing facilities for the treatment of preventable pressure ulcers, effective October 1, 2008. Lyder is also in great demand as a consultant, both within the nursing home industry and in training state regulators charged with enforcing pressure ulcer regulations. “Nurses talk about leadership and making a difference,” he says. “It’s very gratifying to see how something you are doing affects 16,000 nursing homes nationwide.”

Through his research, Lyder has also illustrated the importance of another issue on which he is passionate: diversity in the health care profession. In the literature on pressure ulcer prevention and care, few studies have focused on minority populations. Lyder was one of the first to address the question of whether the interventions used for Latino and African American elders should be the same as for whites—or whether a more culturally sensitive approach could improve outcomes. Among other things, in studies he conducted at Yale, Lyder found that the same Braden Scale that was widely used to identify patients at risk for developing pressure ulcers was not as predictive among Latino and African American patients as it was among whites. As a result of that research, the cutoff scores were adjusted to ensure accuracy when applied to these minority communities.

Beyond the notion that there are physiologic differences across patient populations that health care providers and researchers must take into account, Lyder is a strong believer that diversity in the health care profession is essential to optimize the quality of care. In 2006, he was appointed director of diversity initiatives for the University of Virginia School of Nursing and medical center, where he sought to develop “a medical center staff that looks like the populations it serves,” and was successful in increasing by 15 percent the number of students of color entering nursing graduate programs in 2007.

Research shows that when health care providers are attuned to the patient’s culture, they are better able to identify nuances of how disease is manifest or not in a specific population,” Lyder explains. “They will often ask different questions based on their better understanding. And some patients may be willing to open up more with a

but also to educating the next generation of nurse leaders and scholars. You can just look at our backyard and around the world.”
provider who looks like they do and shares their background.” As the first UCLA School of Nursing dean to have a joint appointment at the Ronald Reagan UCLA Medical Center, Lyder hopes to work with the medical center administration to ensure that diversity continues to be a strength at UCLA.

He points out that his very presence as the leader of one of the nation’s top nursing schools can contribute to encouraging more young people of color, as well as more males, to pursue graduate education and leadership positions in nursing. “We already have one of the most diverse student bodies of any nursing school, and of any professional school on the UCLA campus,” Lyder says. “If I can inspire the next generation of students of color to see that someone like them can be a dean at one of the premier schools of nursing, what a wonderful platform.”

“We need to think outside the box. If we’re going to act globally, we must partner with players on the world stage.”

“Mentoring is very important to me,” says Lyder. “I am a product of good mentoring throughout my professional career. I have an obligation to mentor young nursing professionals and other members of the African American community.”

He says he gets no greater satisfaction than from teaching. “The students, especially at top university schools of nursing, will push you – they hold you to high standards and really challenge you to get out of your comfort zone,” he explains. Once he has settled into his position as dean, Lyder intends to identify a course that he will teach at the school. He also relishes his role as an administrator. “When you can help to remove potential barriers to colleagues’ success, that’s very rewarding,” says Lyder, who describes his leadership style as “participatory.”

One of his major immediate concerns is addressing the nursing shortage, which is perpetuated by a shortage of nursing faculty. Last year, Lyder notes, more than 1,500 qualified students were interested in the school’s generic undergraduate program, but only 55 could be accepted. Lyder hopes to increase the school’s number of endowed faculty to accelerate recruitment, as well as expanding the school’s doctoral program as a way of increasing the pipeline of future nursing faculty. He also hopes to build on the school’s fund-raising efforts – from alumni as well as others in the community who understand the importance of nursing – and to seek new business-sector partners to help tackle the nursing shortage. “We need to think outside the box,” he says. “If we’re going to act globally, we must partner with players on the world stage.”

Given Lyder’s endless energy supply, it’s no surprise that his goals don’t stop there. High on the list in the near term are enhancing the school’s research infrastructure and enterprise, continuing to develop curricula that prepare students for the future demands of health care, increasing financial aid for students, and expanding the school’s presence in Southern California and nationally. To meet one of the nation’s most pressing health care needs, he intends to continue building the school’s capacity in aging research (see the article on the school’s new Center for the Advancement of Gerontological Nursing Science, beginning on page 15). He would like to enhance the school’s global presence by increasing collaborations with nursing schools abroad. With the stronger ties between the School of Nursing and the Ronald Reagan UCLA Medical Center, Lyder hopes to take part in initiatives to model innovative new roles for nursing practice. Ultimately, he would also like to see the school take the lead in establishing a UCLA center on patient safety.

Lyder has no doubt about the ability of the school to achieve these and other goals. He was attracted to the position by UCLA’s reputation as one of the top nursing schools in the country, and by the strong commitment of the UCLA administration to ensuring that the school rises to an even higher level. “We have a world-class faculty with a strong commitment not just to research, but also to educating the next generation of nurse leaders and scholars,” Lyder says. “You can just look at the school’s alumni and see that its graduates are helping to shape the science and practice of nursing in our backyard and around the world.”

Associate Dean for Research and Scholarly Affairs

The School of Nursing at The University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA) invites applicants for the position of Associate Dean for Research and Scholarly Affairs. Candidates should be nurse scientists who currently have focused research program of study and have a distinguished personal record of funded research; and have current research funding from the National Institutes of Health (or similar external funding agencies). She/he should have a good understanding of federal and foundation funding opportunities, and be able to implement translational research between nursing and other disciplines. The Associate Dean for Research and Scholarly Affairs reports to the Dean and is responsible for all of the domestic research and contracts grant enterprise of the school, including mentoring of faculty and students.

Candidates must have the academic credentials to qualify for a tenured appointment at UCLA. Part of their position (50%) will be faculty responsibilities of teaching, research and service. Candidates must have earned degrees in nursing or a related field and have teaching experience at the graduate level. Salary will be commensurate with background and experience.

Associate Dean for Academic Affairs

The School of Nursing at The University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA) invites applicants for the position of Associate Dean for Academic Affairs. The Associate Dean for Academic Affairs reports to the Dean and is responsible for the Academic enterprise for the school. These responsibilities include: curricular and program functions (e.g. curriculum oversight, program evaluation, program development, course scheduling, and doctoral student program advising), accreditation reports, faculty-related academic functions, and community-related functions.

Candidates must have the academic credentials to qualify for a tenured appointment at UCLA. Part of their position (50%) will be faculty responsibilities of teaching, research and service. Candidates must have earned degrees in nursing, with current licensure and teaching experience at the graduate level. Salary will be commensurate with background and experience.

Associate Dean for International Research and Scholarly Affairs

The School of Nursing at The University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA) invites applicants for the position of Associate Dean for International Research and Scholarly Affairs. Candidates should be scientists who currently have a focused research program of study at both the national and international level. The ideal candidate should have a distinguished personal record of funded research (preferably the National Institutes of Health or similar external funding agencies); and have a track record in funding of international research. She/he should have a good understanding of federal, foundation, and international funding opportunities, and be able to implement translational research between nursing and other disciplines on a global level.

This position reports to the Dean and is responsible for the development of all international research-level and scholarship activities for faculty and students.

Candidates must have the academic credentials to qualify for a full professor appointment at UCLA. Part of the position (50%) will be faculty responsibilities of teaching, research and service. Candidates must have earned degrees in nursing or a related field and teaching experience at the graduate level. Salary will be commensurate with background and experience.

UCLA is located in Westwood Village, one of the most beautiful urban areas of Los Angeles. UCLA is ranked as one of the top universities in the U.S. The School of Nursing has a Center for Research for Vulnerable Populations; a nurse-managed practice, the Health Center of the Union Rescue Mission for care of the homeless; and many opportunities in the community as well as the highly acclaimed Ronald Reagan UCLA Medical Center. The School of Nursing offers programs leading to baccalaureate, master’s and doctoral degrees. The UCLA School of Nursing is ranked among the top schools of nursing and continues to excel and grow in a rich professional environment.

The University of California is an Equal Opportunity/Affirmative Action Employer.

Applications will be accepted through November 30, 2008.

Send letter of application and curriculum vitae to:

COURTNEY H. LYDER, ND, GNP, FAAN
DEAN AND PROFESSOR
UCLA School of Nursing, Box 951702
Los Angeles, CA 90095-1702
www.nursing.ucla.edu
PURSUING A DREAM:
New Students Reflect on the Journey

Geovanny Estrada sees his pursuit of a nursing degree at one of the nation’s top universities as a way of paying back his mother for all she has done.

An immigrant from El Salvador whose husband died when Geovanny was just seven months old, Mercedes Estrada raised her son on her own in a working-class neighborhood near Downtown Los Angeles. Though struggling to make ends meet, she stressed education and found a way, through scholarship support, to send her son to highly regarded private Catholic schools. “She always did so much for me,” Geovanny says. “I want to make sure her investment in my education is rewarded.”

At one time he figured he would go into medicine, but Estrada began talking with his cousin, an R.N., and decided that nursing was better aligned with his interests. “It’s more hands-on work with patients, and as a big community-service person I like that,” he says. Estrada applied to four programs – all in Southern California, so that he could stay near his mother – and got into all four. Once he was accepted at UCLA, Estrada knew where he would be going. The scholarships that could help pay for his tuition were a big part of the decision, as was the university’s reputation. “Even in middle school, I always dreamed of going to UCLA,” Estrada says. “When I visited, I loved the fact that I would be part of a small program within the big-university environment. Just being on campus is amazing. My mom was kind of overwhelmed with the idea that I would be moving out, but she is also extremely proud.”

PAYBACK IS SWEET
Geovanny Estrada Entering B.S. (Prelicensure)

Geovanny Estrada sees his pursuit of a nursing degree at one of the nation’s top universities as a way of paying back his mother for all she has done.

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Five students, one for each of the school’s degree programs, discuss what brought them to the UCLA School of Nursing. It wasn’t always easy, but they made it – and wouldn’t have it any other way.
A WINNING STRUGGLE
Lizel Craig Entering: B.S. for R.N.'s

It's never been easy for Lizel Craig, who has fought her way through extreme poverty as a single mother raising four children, and is now one step closer to her ultimate goal. Craig has started the school's "bridge" program, which enables registered nurses to earn a B.S. and M.S.N. in three years. Her dream is to become a nurse practitioner – providing a better life for her family while serving as an advocate and provider of compassionate care to underserved populations struggling to make ends meet in the way Craig often has.

Having been widowed at a young age, Craig is raising four children, ages 2-16. Determined to improve her standing, she went back to school, enrolling at UCLA as an undergraduate in 2000. She received some financial aid, but when it ran out she found herself unable to afford her rent. She spent a brief period of homelessness, relying on the hospitality of friends while spending some nights living out of her car. "Through all that, my kids were great – they just want to make life easier for me," she says. "But at the same time, I want to be able to do more for them." For that, Craig realized, she needed a graduate degree.

Craig believes many of the problems of cost and access to health care could be addressed by better utilization of nurse practitioners, and she is eager to become part of such a solution. She is also motivated by the memories of negative experiences she had as a mother in the Medicaid program. "I would go to different practitioners and get such ugly looks," she recalls. "There would be huge crowds in the waiting rooms and I always felt like we were just a number. Too often, people are treated differently in health care just because they don't have money. I want to help change that.

With a scholarship from the School of Nursing and a tuition reduction for being a UCLA employee, Craig was able to enroll, although working, going to school and attending to her children's needs continues to be a struggle. "Sometimes I've felt like giving up, but I know I can't," she says. "It is such an honor to be here. I am looking forward to joining the ranks of the school's outstanding graduates."

INSPIRED BY ENCOUNTERS WITH NURSES
Carlos Camara Entering: Masters Entry Clinical Nurse (M.E.C.N.)

Carlos Camara came to the United States from Brazil at the age of 20 with $600 to his name. He had known financial hardship all his life. The son of parents who hadn't made it beyond third grade, with a monthly family income of approximately $500, Camara understood the value of education.

His visit to the United States was supposed to be brief – Camara was competing in the 1996 Tae Kwon Do U.S. Open in Colorado Springs, Colo. After finishing fifth, he decided to extend his stay for a few months so that he could learn to speak English.

"A few months" has become 12 years and counting – five months after arriving in the United States, Camara met the woman he would marry, and they now have two daughters.

By the time his wife was expecting their first child, Camara had decided he wanted to go back to school to get his bachelor's degree. When his daughter was born, he saw firsthand the value of the education and care provided by nurses. His experience going through knee surgery only reinforced this conclusion. "The person who explained everything that was going to happen to me and supported me emotionally was a nurse," Camara says. "The doctors came and went, but the nurses were there all the time. I began to think about what a rewarding profession this was, to be so important to someone else's life."

He completed his B.S. in Biochemistry at UCLA last spring, and in January began working as a research assistant to Dr. Aurelia Macabasco-O'Connell, an assistant professor in the School of Nursing. When it came time to apply to nursing schools, Camara had a clear first choice. "I'm a true Bruin," he says. "I love UCLA so much. Even though I'm from outside the United States, there is so much diversity and everyone is so well accepted that I always felt at home. And now, to have the opportunity to learn from faculty at the School of Nursing who are leading researchers and clinicians, it is just incredible."
As a young single mother living in St. Louis, Tiffany Johnson decided she wanted to become a nurse. Though going back to school in her mid-20s while raising her young son would be difficult, Johnson knew that following both her mother and grandmother into the nursing profession would ensure that she could always provide for him. But beyond the financial security, Johnson remembered how she had been treated “like I was just another statistic” as a pregnant teen.

She is convinced that poor monitoring and a lack of counseling on the part of her health care providers led to unnecessary complications – Johnson suffered from eclampsia, a pregnancy-related condition characterized by hypertension and seizures. “When I realized how that could have been so easily prevented, I decided I wanted to make a difference – to help make sure that someone else isn’t treated like that,” she says.

With her family’s support, Johnson went to St. Louis University for her baccalaureate degree in nursing. As an undergraduate nursing student she worked with Community Health in Partnership Services, which provides health care, social services, outreach and educational programs to residents in low-income neighborhoods of St. Louis. And in the summer of her junior year, she came to UCLA to participate in the School of Nursing’s Summer Research Program. Part of UCLA’s Summer Programs for Undergraduate Research (SPUR), the program offers outstanding nursing undergraduates the opportunity to spend a summer working on studies with School of Nursing faculty mentors.

Johnson was paired with Dr. Deborah Koniak-Griffin, professor and director of the school’s Center for Vulnerable Populations Research, on a project to provide HIV and pregnancy-prevention education for adolescent mothers. “It was an eye-opening experience,” Johnson recalls. “It showed me what an impact I could have if I continued with my nursing education.”

After spending the last two years gaining experience working in cardiac care at Ronald Reagan UCLA Medical Center, Johnson is now ready to do just that, as she embarks on the UCLA School of Nursing’s Family Nurse Practitioner program.

“I’m so excited,” she says. “UCLA can open a lot of doors for me. The name speaks for itself.”

For most of her nine years as a nurse practitioner, Christine Samuel-Nakamura ( pictured at right with faculty mentor Dr. Deborah Koniak-Griffin) had thought about one day going back to school to pursue her doctoral degree, but the timing hadn’t been right. First, Samuel-Nakamura wanted to gain clinical experience. She went to work for the Indian Health Service and spent much of her time providing care on Indian reservations. Then, as she became more involved working with underserved communities in remote areas, for an employer that was understaffed and facing budget constraints, Samuel-Nakamura was never able to find the time to apply to Ph.D. programs, much less put aside her practice to focus on doctoral studies.

Still, she never let go of her long-term goal. “It’s hard to work in tribal health without beginning to think about how you might be able to do more for the population,” says Samuel-Nakamura, herself a member of the Navajo Nation. “There is so much geographic isolation, such complex health problems, and a shortage of nurses that’s even more severe than in the overall population. I want to work with existing tribal health programs to help them address the shortage of Native and non-Native health care workers on the reservation. But more than that, I hope to provide a Native view and understanding in research about American Indian illness and wellness theory and contribute to the development of culturally sensitive research and interventions.”

When she decided it was the right time to go back to school for her Ph.D., Samuel-Nakamura knew she wanted to return to the place where she had gotten her master’s degree. “The school gave me a great knowledge base as well as critical thinking skills that helped me so much in my practice,” she says. UCLA is also home to a unique resource for Indian health research, the Center for American Indian and Indigenous Research and Education. “I am very excited to be coming back,” says Samuel-Nakamura. “I am ready to move to the next level of my profession.”
There’s no avoiding it: We are getting older. Not just each of us as individuals, but the nation as a whole. Between 2000 and 2030, the number of U.S. residents older than 65 is expected to more than double, to 71.5 million. One of eight Americans was 65 or older in 2000; in barely more than two decades, it will be one in five. And nowhere is the graying occurring more rapidly than in California, which already has 3.5 million 65-and-older adults, more than any state in the country. The fastest-growing segment within that population: adults 85 and older.

For health professionals, the older population presents unique challenges. At least half have so-called co-morbidities – the presence of two or more chronic conditions such as hypertension, arthritis, heart disease, cancer, and diabetes, leading to the potential for complications and functional decline resulting from care fragmentation and multiple medications. Disability contributes to vulnerability because of the potential for social isolation, dependency and decreased access to care. Many also become frail – a condition characterized by weight loss, fatigue, weakness, low activity, balance and gait abnormalities, as well as the potential for cognitive impairment – and are thus at higher risk for falls and hospitalizations. Co-morbidity, disability and premature frailty are most prevalent among minority elders, and California has arguably the most diverse elderly population in the United States.

Fostering Wisdom About Society’s Elders

The School’s New Center for the Advancement of Gerontological Nursing Science Tackles Key Aging Issues
No health profession is better suited to tackle issues of aging than nursing. “The challenges that people have as they age tend to be challenges related to everyday living, and that is what nursing is about,” says Dr. Linda Phillips, professor and Audrienne H. Moseley Endowed Chair at the UCLA School of Nursing. “Beyond any kind of curative approach, nursing aims to help older adults solve everyday problems and better cope with whatever they are facing, whether it’s frailty, disability, or end of life.”

Phillips and other elder-focused colleagues have marshaled their efforts to establish a new center that greatly enhances the school’s leadership role in tackling issues of concern when it comes to the older-adult population. The Center for the Advancement of Gerontological Nursing Science, with Phillips as director, has a three-pronged mission:

• Develop new knowledge about gerontological nursing care;
• Educate the nursing workforce about gerontological care; and
• Build multidisciplinary and community-based partnerships for the purpose of developing and testing new care models designed to improve safety and quality.

A nursing-focused gerontology center is much needed in light of the challenges that are being presented, Phillips notes. While much of the focus has been on studying aging-related clinical conditions, less attention has been paid to improving the quality of life and safety of care provided to vulnerable elders. Little research has been done on strategies that could reduce premature deaths, functional declines that diminish quality of life, and the need for early institutionalization. Few efforts have been made to study the impact of nursing interventions or to systematically alter nursing practice or nursing care delivery systems in ways that improve safety and quality for this population. Phillips herself became involved in such research early in her career, after she realized through her experiences as a public health nurse that there was a huge discrepancy in the abilities of family members to provide care for frail elderly individuals living in the community. Her current research focuses on elder abuse and neglect in residential care.

There is considerable evidence that the care for older adults is suboptimal, in part because of a shortage of nurses specially prepared in gerontological care. “Too often, mistakes are made when we try to treat older adults like other adults,” says Dr. Courtney H. Lyder, dean of the UCLA School of Nursing and an expert in geriatric nursing issues. Lyder notes that by not understanding some of the unique needs of elders, nurses and other health care providers can place them at greater risk for over-sedation (older adults often metabolize drugs differently than younger adults); adverse drug interactions from being on multiple medications, often unnecessarily; problems with in-
continence, which can lead to earlier-than-necessary nursing home admissions; complications from cognitive declines; preventable skin problems, including pressure ulcers; and the potentially devastating consequences of falls, among others.

Nursing brings a novel perspective to these issues by looking at patients and their needs holistically, says Dr. Lynn Woods, assistant professor and one of the center’s core faculty members. “We look at what elders and their caregivers are dealing with and provide them with practical assistance to help them succeed,” she explains. Similarly, says Woods, nursing research draws on a number of disciplines – including psychology, sociology, and physiology as well as the basic sciences – to define the best approaches to optimizing quality of life and care.

Woods’ own background is in geriatric psychiatry and neuroscience; she focuses on the contribution of stress to the biological, behavioral, and social components of Alzheimer’s Disease. In studying stress hormones and genetics as predictors of agitated behavior among people with dementia, she has found that patients with apolipoprotein E4, a gene that increases the Alzheimer’s disease risk, are also at increased risk for problem behaviors such as restlessness and screaming that are common to more than half of people with dementia. Woods has also explored the effect of complementary treatments, specifically therapeutic touch. “Medications tend to be detrimental in treating behavioral problems for people with Alzheimer’s disease, so we need to come up with non-pharmacological approaches,” she explains. Woods has found that compassionate and therapeutic touch not only decreases agitated behavior, but also appears to lower the levels of a key stress hormone for people with Alzheimer’s disease.

The research of Woods and others at the new center can provide invaluable guidance into how nurses can maximize their contribution to the care of elder patients, says Dr. Linda Searle Leach, assistant professor and another of the center’s core faculty members. At a time in which the rapidly growing population of elders threatens to further strain an already frayed health care system, she notes, such guidance is needed now more than ever. “Nursing has been an underutilized resource for this population,” Leach says. “In addition to improving quality of life and patient safety, nursing research and education to improve the system of care delivery for elders can go a long way toward reducing health-related costs.” Leach brings to the center an expertise in health services research, particularly focusing on quality management systems, safety interventions and care delivery within health care organizations. She is conducting research on health care teams that use a nurse-to-nurse consultation approach in critical situations. The work is foundational to testing new models of teamwork among nurses and other disciplines to improve care delivered to older adults in different settings, as well as during transitions from one setting to another.

The UCLA Center for the Advancement of Gerontological Science builds on a rich tradition of gerontological nursing research and education at the School of Nursing. In 1972, UCLA was among the first nursing schools in the country to offer a gerontology track within a family nurse practitioner program, and within a decade, it was offering a gerontology clinical specialist program and a gerontology nurse practitioner program. The school now has a large cadre of gerontology-focused faculty, including eight who are actively participating in the center’s work.

One of the center’s main goals is to enhance gerontology education within all of the school’s adult health specialties. “We’re looking not only at gerontology, but also at acute care, occupational health, and oncology, where our students are going to be seeing a large number of older patients,” Phillips explains. The center recently received funding from the federal Health Resources and Services Administration for a project that will provide supplemental gerontology education and activities for doctoral students in the adult health specialties. A second major thrust pertains to community outreach. The center has submitted a proposal that would provide gerontology education to nurses currently in practice, many of whom graduated before
the gerontology emphasis became widespread at nursing schools. “We’re looking at ways to get more practicing nurses certified in gerontological nursing so that they are better able to handle elders in all settings and are more sensitive to the problems elders have as they live with conditions in the community,” Phillips says.

The center’s initial research emphasis is on transitional care. “One of the problems that older people have is that going into the hospital can be hazardous to their health,” Phillips notes. “Often, that’s because when they’re discharged there is very little planning. Medical errors can occur when they transition either from the hospital to their home or to a nursing home or assisted living facility.”

Phillips suggests that the focus on transitional care would likely never have come about if the center’s faculty members had remained on separate research tracks. Together, she explains, they are able to take a broader view, joining forces on big-picture projects in which they can each bring their expertise to the table.

Individual faculty members also benefit from having a closer working relationship with other gerontology researchers. Dr. Barbara Bates-Jensen, whose interest is in improving the quality of pressure ulcer care in nursing homes, notes that like many chronic conditions or syndromes affecting the elderly, pressure ulcers (also called bedsores) are influenced by multiple factors. “Comprehensive prevention strategies have to consider a variety of issues, including frailty, nutrition, and incontinence management,” Bates-Jensen says. “A center such as this gives us the opportunity to bring faculty members together to look at the problem in a more cohesive manner, and that type of research can have a more significant impact.”

Bates-Jensen is working on integrating technology to improve the quality of pressure ulcer care in nursing homes. The incidence of pressure ulcers is considered an important quality indicator in all health care settings, with evidence that many of them could be prevented with better care, including improved screening and identification of high-risk individuals along with better implementation of simple prevention strategies such as turning patients in their beds and keeping them dry. Bates-Jensen has been testing the efficacy of a Web-based quality assessment software system, as well as a hand-held device that helps to predict pressure ulcers before they are visible by measuring moisture levels. She is also co-investigator on a study to implement the use of digital pen technology for pressure ulcer prevention and treatment in nursing homes.

Lyder, who arrived in August from the University of Virginia, is also a nationally renowned expert in pressure ulcer prevention and treatment whose work is described in the profile beginning on page 6. Along with Phillips, Leach and Woods, other core faculty members in the center include:

Dr. Janet Mentes. Mentes, an associate professor at the school, focuses in her research on the vulnerable population of frail nursing home residents. One-third of nursing home residents experience dehydration, often in combination with conditions such as diabetes, stroke, pneumonia, urinary tract infections or dementia. “Dehydration is a pervasive yet under-diagnosed problem in older persons,” Mentes explains, noting that 20 percent of community-dwelling elders are also found to be dehydrated as measured by laboratory tests. “Hydration problems can be precursors to many other health problems, including infections, medication toxicity, falls, and delirium.” Mentes has demonstrated through her research that easy methods to evaluate hydration status, using urine color and, more recently, saliva analysis, can be employed effectively in nursing homes. She is continuing to evaluate the efficacy of oral hydration management in nursing homes and other community settings, as well as exploring ways to best translate her findings into practice.

Dr. Mary Cadogan. Cadogan, an adjunct professor at the school, has focused on improving
the quality of care for vulnerable nursing home residents, particularly in the areas of pain management and end-of-life care. She collaborated on a major study to develop and test quality indicators for seven clinical conditions in 30 California nursing homes, and worked on a Veterans Administration study to pilot-test revisions to the Minimum Data Set, a 600-item tool used to assess every person admitted to a nursing home in the United States. Nationally recognized for her expertise in palliative and end-of-life care for older adults, particularly for older adults dying in nursing homes, she chairs the Long Term Care Workgroup and serves on the executive committee of the California Coalition of Compassionate Care, a statewide coalition of more than 60 organizations dedicated to improving end-of-life care in California. Cadogan is currently working on tools to improve communication about end-of-life treatment decisions. Her future goals include development of an effective nurse-to-nurse communication system to improve care of older adults as they transition between hospitals and nursing homes.

Dr. Karen Gylys. Gylys, a neuroscientist and associate professor at the school, brings a basic science presence and gero-pharmacology expertise to the center. Her bench research is focused on understanding the pathways that lead to synapse damage and loss in Alzheimer’s disease. “Many in the field hypothesize that Alzheimer’s disease begins in the synapse, so it’s important to define the earliest molecular changes, when there may be opportunity for reversal,” she says. Gylys’ lab studies mouse models and postmortem brain tissue from Alzheimer’s and control patients. Her group has found that cholesterol is increased in amyloid-containing nerve terminals, suggesting a potential target for drug therapies such as the so-called statin drugs, which lower cholesterol. Gylys has also begun to study how apolipoprotein E, the biggest known genetic risk for late-onset Alzheimer’s disease, affects cholesterol and synaptic pathology.

Given her nursing background, Gylys has a particular interest in ensuring that her laboratory findings are used wherever possible to improve clinical outcomes. “Being a nurse keeps my work grounded in what’s happening in the caregiving world,” she says. “I am constantly talking with clinicians – I bring something to them, and they bring something to me.”

Just as Gylys’ basic science work is partially driven by the larger context of what is happening with dementia patients, the UCLA Center for the Advancement of Gerontological Science is looking at the big picture to develop coordinated strategies that ensure its work in research, education and community outreach is as effective as can be at addressing key issues affecting the aging population.

“A center such as this gives us the opportunity to bring faculty members together to look at the problem in a more cohesive manner, and that type of research can have a more significant impact.”

Dr. Barbara Bates-Jensen
THE CHIRONIAN SOCIETY

The membership in The Chironian Society continues to grow and we are grateful to our alumni for their commitment. 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 fundraising arm, with annual renewal memberships to allow us to forecast our 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 our Web site: www.nursing.ucla.edu.
School, Medical Center
Forge Closer Ties

The relationship between the UCLA School of Nursing and the renowned Ronald Reagan UCLA Medical Center is being considerably strengthened with the arrival of Dean Courtney H. Lyder. Lyder will become the school’s first dean to have an official appointment with the medical center – an assistant director title within UCLA Health System, according to Heidi Crooks, the medical center’s senior associate director of operations and patient care services. Crooks already holds an appointment as assistant dean in the School of Nursing.

“This is a relationship that can bring great benefits to both the school and our nursing community at Ronald Reagan UCLA Medical Center,” says Crooks. “Dean Lyder is very interested in having the school become more engaged in the hospital, and we are thrilled by that prospect.”

Many of the clinical nurses specialists are instructors at the School of Nursing, and nursing staff teach and supervise students during their practicum experience, Crooks notes. Having Lyder and members of the school’s faculty more involved in the medical center’s operations paves the way for many mutually supportive activities. “Faculty can serve on committees and contribute their expertise on issues such as quality improvement and outcomes-based research, while staying in touch with the latest trends in technology and patient care and becoming more familiar with the environment in which their students are working,” says Crooks. “It’s a win-win relationship.”

M.E.C.N. Class Pinning Ceremony

The inaugural class of M.E.C.N. students celebrated at a pinning ceremony June 10, just a few days from their anticipated graduation day. The students paid tribute to those who were instrumental in their two-year journey: Dr. Suzette Cardin, assistant dean of student affairs; Dr. Carol Pavlish, assistant professor, who presented her speech via video as she was traveling to Africa; and to the person who kept them on track, Shelli Shepherd, student services coordinator. Congratulations to the ’08 M.E.C.N. graduates!

In Memoriam

The Late Bloomers class of ’57 was saddened by the loss of Ann Ivey, who died in May. Ann had served as chief of community health services for the city of San Bernardino, and was a lecturer in the UCLA School of Nursing who taught community and public health. Family and friends paid tribute to her love of UCLA by contributing to the School of Nursing’s Dean Marie Cowan Endowed Scholarship Fund in her memory.

The school was also notified of the death of Rosabelle Gunefson, ’59, last April with a bequest gift to the Dean Marie Cowan Endowed Scholarship Fund.

The school and UCLA Medical Center mourned the loss in May of Michael Crooks, the husband of Heidi Crooks, senior associate director of patient care services and an associate dean at the school. Memory gifts for Michael were also donated to the Dean Marie Cowan Endowed Scholarship Fund.

Finally, the school was saddened to learn of the sudden passing of George Stefanik, a retired cardiovascular and thoracic surgeon who died September 5. George was the beloved companion of Terry Bream, ’67, ’72.

We extend our heartfelt sympathies to these school family members who have experienced tremendous loss, and send wishes of comfort and peace in the days ahead.
School of Nursing Annual Giving — July 1, 2007 to June 30, 2008

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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 Vanessa Botshekan-Hill at 310-267-1662 or e-mail vbotshekan@support.ucla.edu

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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.
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- Bequests are a significant source of support for the School of Nursing.

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