A master's degree in nursing administration prepares the school's graduates for increasingly important positions in a growing number of settings.
In Victorville, Calif., a student in our nursing administration program recently led the strategic planning process for a School of Nursing. This was just one example of the valuable practicum experiences students in this program receive — except for one thing. A physician in the area had pledged to contribute $100,000 to the school, contingent on development of the plan. Applying skills she learned in our program, Marcia Prieto helped the school come up with a plan that so impressed the physician he increased his donation from $100,000 to $1 million.

Although the value of preparation through our M.S.N. in Nursing Administration Program is not always so easily quantified in dollars, it is very evident based on the demand for our graduates that we have entered a time in which the leadership and management skills of nurses are increasingly appreciated, and that the excellent preparation offered by our faculty and the many community preceptors who oversee our students in their practicum experiences is particularly prized.

As the cover story of this issue of UCLA School of Nursing News illustrates, our program is providing an important service in the community by preparing nurses to fulfill leadership roles in nursing administration and occupational health settings. The solid foundation provided by our faculty — themselves experienced nurse administrators and executives — gives our graduates the business, financial and leadership skills needed to meet the complex challenges of today’s health care environment. Moreover, at a time when opportunities are opening up for nurse administrators in numerous fields beyond the direct-care setting, the foundation our students receive is proving to be excellent preparation for any avenue they choose to pursue. As with all of the advanced practice nurses who graduate from our school, these students enter a job market that values their services more than ever before.

Marie J. Cowan, R.N., Ph.D., F.A.A.N.
BULLOUGH LECTURE SERIES — Barbara L. Nichols (left, with Dean Marie Cowan and Dr. Vern Bullough) presented “Globalization of the Professions: Implications for Nursing” at the second Bonnie Bullough Lecture Series in February. Nichols reviewed the global marketplace as characterized by changing demographics of the labor force, accelerated technological change, and deregulation and internationalization of markets worldwide. This lectureship was made possible by Dr. Vern Bullough in memory of his late wife, Dr. Bonnie Bullough. With a gift of $25,000, Vern Bullough established an endowed lectureship fund that will provide sufficient income to make a lecture possible every other year, with each highlighting an outstanding nurse. For information pertaining to this or other endowed gift opportunities to the school, please contact Director of Development Sharon La Pointe at 310/206-3662, or by email: lapointe@support.ucla.edu.

Changes in Doctoral Program To Be Implemented This Fall

The UCLA School of Nursing doctoral program will be restructured beginning this fall, the first substantial revisions since the program began offering a Ph.D. degree as opposed to a D.N.Sc. degree in 1995.

A separate Doctoral Program Committee was created beginning in 2002-03, and members of the committee have spent the last year reviewing the program and proposing revisions, which were recently approved by the school’s faculty and the campus’s Graduate Council.

One of the key changes was to identify four core strands of research offered by the program, with faculty clustered in each core: Biologic Sciences, Biobehavioral Sciences, Health Disparities/Vulnerable Populations, and Health Services. Students applying to the Ph.D. program will now choose one of these four areas as their core. In addition, existing courses have been modified, and new courses have been added. “These courses will introduce the breadth of nursing science and the work of key nurse scientists to students in their first year,” says Dr. Gwen van Servellen, chair of the Doctoral Program Committee. “The students will proceed from this basic introduction to selecting courses in their core content areas.”

Finally, as an alternative to the traditional dissertation, Ph.D. students will be able to conclude their dissertation with three publishable papers, written under the guidance of their committee members and submitted to peer-reviewed journals for publication. “The idea is to take these future nurse scientists through the dissemination phase of research,” explains van Servellen. “This might enable them to have publications in print sooner after they graduate.”

AN INCOME YOU CANNOT OUTLIVE

The chart below shows the various UCLA rates in effect for selected ages. The figures are related to a one-life gift annuity. The older you are the higher the rate!

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<th>AGE</th>
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<td>70</td>
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For two individuals, the rates are somewhat lower because payments are made for their combined lifetimes.

ADDITIONAL BENEFITS:

Not only do you receive an income you cannot outlive, but you also are entitled to an income tax charitable deduction in the year you make the gift. In addition, there is also a possibility that a portion of the annuity payment will be tax-free.

YOUR LEGACY AT THE SCHOOL OF NURSING

Perhaps the very best part of the gift annuity is your ability to support the School of Nursing without endangering your retirement income. In fact, you may find that just the opposite is true: you may actually realize an increase in your retirement income if you use low yielding, highly appreciated stock to establish your gift annuity.

To explore the personal rewards and financial benefits of giving to the UCLA School of Nursing, please call Sharon LaPointe at 310-206-3662, email lapointe@support.ucla.edu or visit the UCLA Office of Planned Giving Web site at www.giftplanning.ucla.edu.

Or, please complete and mail this coupon to:

UCLA OFFICE OF GIFT PLANNING
Post Office Box 240037, Los Angeles, CA 90024-9137

☐ Yes, I would like to learn more about the rewards and financial benefits of giving to UCLA School of Nursing through a UCLA Foundation Charitable Gift Annuity.

☐ I also would like information concerning other gift-planning options.

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Address ________________________________
City/State/Zip ____________________________
Phone _________________________________

Date of Birth __________ Spouse/Beneficiary Date of Birth __________

*All information is confidential
As the chief nursing officer at Queen of Angels-Hollywood Presbyterian Medical Center, a 434-bed hospital in East Hollywood, Beverly Quaye grapples with issues of strategic planning, quality of care, financial constraints and even, since Sept. 11, 2001, emergency preparedness for a potential bioterrorist event – along with the human resources issues that come with overseeing 700 employees and ensuring that her facility remains grounded in strong nursing practice and standards.

As director of the Oncology Clinical Specialists team at Amgen Inc., a Fortune 500 pharmaceutical company in Thousand Oaks, Calif., Kathryn West oversees five managers who supervise 50 oncology clinical nurse specialists supporting the company’s sales force by educating health care professionals across the United States about Amgen products and serving as clinical consultants in the management of cancer patients whose anemia and neutropenia are treated by the company’s supportive care drugs.

Commander Lori S. Frank of the U.S. Navy Nurse Corps is director of the Joint Medical Executive Skills Institute (JMESI), the unit responsible for educational programs for executive medicine in the U.S. Department of Defense, Military Healthcare System. As it strives to become the single point of service for executive medicine accreditation within the Department of Defense, JMESI under Frank’s guidance is strategically changing the way military executive leaders are educated by adopting tools such as distance learning modules and an online self-assessment.

“Whenever an employer wants a mixture of a clinical background with a foundation in the principles of leadership, business concepts and how organizations work, our graduates are the perfect people.”

— Dr. Donna McNeese-Smith

(standing)

Nurses have always taken unusual jobs, but today a wider variety of health-related leadership positions are opening up, and nurses are often the obvious people to fill them,” says Dr. Donna McNeese-Smith, associate professor and coordinator of the school’s M.S.N. in Nursing Administration program. “Whenever an employer wants a mixture of a clinical background with a foundation in the principles of leadership, business concepts and how organizations work, our graduates are the perfect people.”
ical Center, one implemented an online orientation program for critical care nurses, and yet another developed programs to serve vulnerable populations at L.A. County-USC Children’s Hospital. “The practicum experience is a real strength of the program,” says McNeese-Smith. “It gives students a chance to see how the theory we teach them is applied in real-life settings.”

West, who graduated from the program in 1996, believes the breadth and depth of education in aspects of nursing administration – from leadership models to the ability to articulate verbally and on paper – have been critical to her success. “You weren’t locked into one type of position,” she says. “It gave me the ability to branch out into an atypical industry, where I have a multi-faceted role that includes managing people, systems, projects and politics. Many of my peers from the program have done the same thing.”

The fact that nurse administrators are in growing demand both in and outside of the health care setting doesn’t surprise West. “Assess, plan, implement, evaluate – that’s the underlying process for everything,” she says. “And as nurses, that’s our core.”

Jackie Block, a supervisor for Children’s Home Care, entered the nursing administration program last fall intending to remain in the home care arena, but after seeing all of the opportunities available to the program’s graduates, she’s leaving her options open. “I will try to experience varied settings and nursing leaders during my time at UCLA,” she says. Among other possibilities, she is considering several positions that would capitalize on her strong knowledge base in home care policies and procedures: surveyor for the Joint Committee on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations, nurse consultant, or nursing instructor at the junior college level.

As deputy director and, beginning this spring, director of the U.S. Navy Nurse Corps unit that promotes scholarship and inquiry to advance executive skills for Military Healthcare System leadership, Frank, who graduated with her M.S.N. in nursing administration last year, has guided her unit through substantial changes. “Mission, vision, goals and objectives now exist where

“One of our goals is to help our students learn to be creative thinkers. [Nurse administrators are] much more involved in the decision-making process today.”

Dr. Suzette Cardin (center)
there were none previously," she says. Concepts such as strategic planning, Web design, marketing, budgeting, goal development, and project management that were learned in the nursing administration courses assisted her through this process, she adds. Frank also believes her graduate education helped provide her with the courage and confidence to start projects that are "outside the traditional nursing box."

"One of our goals is to help our students learn to be creative thinkers," says Cardin. Over the course of her career, Cardin explains, she has seen nursing administration become more of a "thinking" profession. "We're much more involved in the decision-making process today," she says.

Many graduates continue to remain in contact with their former instructors, conversing about the formidable tasks they face as organizational leaders. "It's a very challenging time in health care," says Quaye, who graduated in 1994. But, as chief nursing officer for a large acute-care facility, she derives satisfaction from the enormity of her role. "It's nearly an impossible job, but I feel very confident every day that no matter what is put in front of me, I can handle it," she says. "The nursing administration program at UCLA prepared me for that."

Given her position as a full-time nurse manager of the Surgical Intensive Care Unit and Trauma Resuscitation Room at UC San Diego Medical Center, Deborah Snyder couldn't have been surprised by the double takes of colleagues when she told them she was concurrently pursuing a master's degree in nursing administration from UCLA, 125 miles to the north. But Snyder, who completed the program this spring, was able to keep her day job while earning a graduate degree from one of the nation's most prestigious nursing administration programs because she took it online, through UCLA's first Internet-based degree-granting program, offered through the School of Nursing.

"The classes were of the highest quality, interactive, captured my attention, and were very informative," she says. "The only difference between online and on ground is I could attend school at night in my pajamas and didn't have to drive 250 miles round trip."

This is the third year the school has offered its master's in nursing administration program online, thanks to a grant from eCollege.com that funded its initial development as well as quarterly revisions. Participating students "attend" lectures online, at the hour of their choosing. The lectures include PowerPoint presentations and questions for initiating threaded discussion. (Students are still required to come to campus a handful of times during the year, such as when presentations are required.)

"It was always our belief that if we put a program online – especially for nursing administrators, who tend to be busy with full-time jobs – we would be able to increase our enrollment without sacrificing the quality of the instruction," says Dr. Adey Nyamathi, associate dean for academic affairs. The online program enabled one student to go to the East Coast for an internship while staying hooked into the classroom as if she had never left, Nyamathi notes. Another participated while on maternity leave from her job.

Faculty continue to test and evaluate the program, but so far the consensus is that it is a major success. Student evaluations have been overwhelmingly positive in the two years the program has been offered, and the faculty have been pleased by the depth of discussion facilitated by the online environment. "The wonderful thing about the program is that the students get exactly the same content that we provide on ground," says Dr. Donna McNeese-Smith, associate professor and coordinator of the nursing administration program.

"It's not for everyone," says Ramon De La Fuente, a first-year student who is a nurse administrator at Sharp Chula Vista Medical Center in San Diego. "It requires a certain amount of discipline and independence. You don't get as much in-person contact and camaraderie with your classmates. On the other hand, there's a lot of flexibility. I sometimes end up being online at 2 or 3 a.m., and it helps me to focus when I am by myself. For me, it works well."
Health Services Research:

More Nurses Looking at Impact of Structure, Process on Outcomes of Care

Health services research – focusing on the inter-relationships among the structure, process and outcomes of care in a variety of settings – is a growing area of interest among nurse researchers. It is also an increasing focus at the UCLA School of Nursing, where faculty such as Dr. Donna McNeese-Smith and Dr. Gwen van Servellen who study health services were recently joined by Dr. Marie Fongwa, who came to the school in 2001, and will soon be joined by Dr. Valda Upenieks, due to arrive this summer. A health services research course has also been developed for the doctoral program.

“Nurses are particularly adept at looking at health systems and their processes as they affect patient outcomes, but we have not taken leadership roles in this type of research in the past,” says van Servellen.

But that is changing. At UCLA, Dean Marie Cowan of the School of Nursing is the principal investigator of the Multidisciplinary Doctor Nurse Project (MDNP), a major award from the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality. Cowan heads an interdisciplinary research team from the fields of nursing, medicine and public health in a study that enrolled more than 1,200 patients on the general medicine floor of UCLA Medical Center.

Patients were divided into a control (i.e., usual care) unit and an experimental unit, with the latter seeing a multidisciplinary team of advanced nurse practitioners and physicians as well as other nurses, discharge planners, pharmacists, physical therapists, and social workers. The nurse practitioners were part of the management team during the hospital stay and followed the patients at home for one month. Preliminary analysis indicates that the effects of a collaborative multidisciplinary team with advanced practice nurses caused reductions in costs.

Van Servellen is looking at the individual and system factors affecting patient adherence to treatment and subsequent health outcomes. Working with a low-income population of Latino men with HIV, many of whom are immigrants, van Servellen is testing the effects of an intervention program to improve health literacy and treatment adherence. A treatment adherence enhancement program, which supplements the clinical care received by these patients at community-based centers, provides more in-depth counseling and education.

“These patients are being prescribed very sophisticated medication regimens that require a basic level of literacy and health knowledge,” van Servellen explains. “Their insurance status, immigration status, and income also play a role in their access to services. The question is how we can best prepare them to interact as effectively as possible with the system they’re confronting, in order to achieve the best outcomes.”

Ethnic minorities generally have poorer health status than their majority counterparts in the United States, even when taking into account factors such as available health care services and health insurance. Fongwa’s research asks whether this has to do with differences in the quality of care – a difficult concept due to its subjectivity and cultural differences in how quality is defined. Fongwa has explored quality health care from the perspectives of African, Latino, and Caucasian Americans and has modified a popular patient satisfaction instrument to capture these views.

“Learning from these groups about factors influencing their access to quality care would be invaluable for planning culturally sensitive health care – a health disparity-reducing mechanism,” she says. “To provide populations with care that really meets their needs and desires, one must take the time to learn from them about the factors that influence their health and access to quality care, then use the group’s strengths to institute programs that they can identify with, respecting their beliefs and culture, and that address the health issues of importance to them.”

McNeese-Smith is examining substance abuse treatment in managed care settings – including factors such as cost, the number of hours substance abuse patients covered by managed care receive in treatment, the intensity, duration and type of treatment they’re offered, the types of programs (such as group and individual therapy and Alcoholics Anonymous), and how these treatment structures and processes affect post-treatment outcomes including substance use, employment, quality of life, and cost of treatment. Her research is also expanding to examine the effect of treatment after a year, the role of motivation, the influence of gender and ethnicity, and whether sexually transmitted diseases, including HIV/AIDS, are of concern among this insured, mostly employed population.

“Most research has focused on public programs and the uninsured,” McNeese-Smith says. “Managed care implemented new treatment modalities among the insured with little evidence of the effects on these individuals. Our research will help explain what works, and what doesn’t, in improving the outcomes of treatment under managed care.”

Sherri Mendelson had often found herself frustrated during her 20-plus year nursing career in maternal-child health by the lack of, poor quality of, or failure of coordination of health care services, particularly for high-risk pregnant women, leading to avoidable adverse outcomes. “The pregnancy outcomes that most of us take for granted are not positive for all mothers and babies,” she says. She became convinced that nursing has a significant contribution to make in designing the future of maternal-child health services delivery through evidence-based practice. With mentors such as McNeese-Smith and Dr. Wendie Robbins, Mendelson is now a doctoral student embarking on her dissertation work, for which she will examine outcomes of education programs for pregnant diabetics.
POSTDOCTORAL AWARD – Lorraine Evangelista was one of only five campus-wide recipients of the prestigious Chancellor’s Award for Postdoctoral Research. The award, established to acknowledge the integral role of postdoctoral fellows to the university’s research mission, includes a $3,000 prize. Evangelista, whose research focuses on quality of life and adherence to treatment of heart failure patients, is pictured with (l. to r.) Dr. Lynn Doering, one of her faculty mentors along with Dr. Kathleen Dracup; Dean Marie Cowan; and Associate Dean for Academic Affairs Adeline Nyamathi.

CHIRONIANS SCHOLARSHIPS – Thanks to the ongoing generous philanthropy of its annual fund donors, Chironians Board Chair Cathy Tucker (M.N. ’82), left, was able to award five Chironians scholarships to deserving nursing students. Top row, left to right: Verna Pineda, Deborah MacDonald. Bottom row, left to right: Alyssa Barker, Timothy Petro. Not present: scholarship recipient Lynn McNally.

Please send any changes of address, as well as professional or personal updates for use in future issues, to: Sharon LaPointe, UCLA School of Nursing News, Box 951702, Los Angeles, CA 90095-1702. You may also fax to (310) 206-7433, or e-mail to lapointe@support.ucla.edu.