No, this is not a commercial. An online degree program is just one of the ways in which the school is putting technology to good use on behalf of its students, faculty and the community it serves.
When the UCLA School of Nursing opened its doors more than 50 years ago, it immediately assumed a prominent place as a leader in a new brand of nursing education. For more than a half century, the school has continued to lead the way with its cutting-edge research, teaching and community service programs. So it should come as no surprise that, as information technology creates remarkable new opportunities in research, education and health care, our school is at the forefront of efforts to capitalize.

Of course, these opportunities are not unique to nursing. Indeed, at UCLA, Chancellor Albert Carnesale has identified information technology as a frontier of knowledge for the entire university to pursue. And as this issue of UCLA School of Nursing News illustrates, we at the school are doing our part in finding ways to use the technology to enhance our mission.

We are the first at UCLA to offer an entire degree program over the Internet. With a grant from eCollege.com, our Nursing Administration Program is currently developing an online option that will be available to students beginning this fall. This will enable us to reach students who, either because they live in remote areas or because of conflicts with their work schedules, would otherwise be unable to enroll. Since this is uncharted territory for UCLA, we will pay close attention to student satisfaction and retention, as well as learning outcomes. We have already offered courses over the Internet, and have found that outcomes are comparable between the online students and the traditional students.

Our auditorium, where the largest lectures take place, underwent a complete transformation and is now a showcase facility for the campus, with state-of-the-art audiovisuals, top-of-the-line acoustics, comfortable theater-style seating, electrical and Internet connections for every student, and videoconferencing capabilities. This will improve the quality of our presentations on campus as well as expanding the school’s reach to the outside community. Moreover, under the UCLA Connected Model, our faculty, staff and students have begun operating on a new high-speed network with state-of-the-art servers and computers, as well as a high-speed, large-bandwidth connection to the campus network backbone.

These are just a few of the examples of how we are using information technology to facilitate the excellent research and teaching we do at the school, as well as to extend our influence beyond the campus. We have only begun to tap the potential of this incredible technology. We are excited about the prospects for the future.

Marie J. Cowan, R.N., Ph.D., FAAN
Dean, UCLA School of Nursing
Dr. Mary Woo Appointed Associate Dean for Research

Dr. Mary Woo, an associate professor in the school’s Acute Care Section, has been appointed to serve as the school’s associate dean for research.

“I am very excited because of all the opportunities to investigate and evaluate new ways of organizing the research office, and to work on research projects with students and grant applications with our school’s wonderfully bright and innovative faculty,” Woo says. “On the other hand, it is also somewhat intimidating because I have a lot to learn about the campus research structure, and Dr. [Adeline] Nyamathi has done a fantastic job. She will be a hard act to follow.”

Nyamathi, associate dean for academic affairs, has also served as acting associate dean for research since the departure of Dr. Geraldine Padilla, who held the office from 1987 to 1999. “Dr. Padilla, along with Dean Cowan and Associate Dean Nyamathi, have laid a very strong foundation for research at the school,” says Woo. She plans to continue strategies that have helped to dramatically increase the school’s research productivity and funding, including grant-modeling gatherings and meetings on important components of the research process. Woo also hopes to increase access to research office materials (applications, forms, research checklists, grant opportunities, statistical analysis sites) via the Internet.

Woo received a B.S. degree in genetics from UC Davis and got her baccalaureate in nursing from Mount St. Mary’s College in Los Angeles in 1985, before enrolling at the UCLA School of Nursing, where she earned her master’s degree in 1988 and her doctorate in 1992. She was appointed to the school’s faculty the following year.

Her research has focused on investigations into autonomic-cardiac interactions in relation to sudden death risk, particularly in advanced heart failure patients. Currently, she is examining the relationship between sleep, heart rate variability, and brain activity using sleep studies, and mapping the central nervous system response to autonomic challenge in heart failure patients using functional magnetic resonance imaging.

She is a fellow of the American Heart Association - Council on Cardiovascular Nursing, and has published more than 50 peer-reviewed articles, abstracts and book chapters.

SCHOOL OF NURSING DONORS TO FUNDS OTHER THAN THE CHIRONIANS

JULY 1, 1999, TO JUNE 30, 2000

In the fall 2000 issue of UCLA Nursing, donors to The Chironians for the period July 1, 1999 to June 30, 2000 were listed. While The Chironians are the school’s major fund-raising group, it should be noted that important donations can be made to other funds to support the UCLA School of Nursing.

We recognize these donors (for the same period) below.

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CLINICAL PRECEPTORS HONORED — First-year graduate students, clinical preceptors, Dean Marie Cowan, and faculty members in the Primary Care Section (Family, Gerontology, Midwifery, Occupational and Environmental Health, and Pediatrics) met October 7 to discuss opportunities to enhance the students’ learning experiences in the various clinical specialty courses. Time was also devoted to acknowledging the outstanding contributions of the clinical faculty in preparing the students to provide primary care services in community-based settings throughout Southern California.
This is also a small group of students who tend to be comfortable with the Internet, so it’s a natural group for us to start with."

“This online option will allow students to complete coursework while continuing to meet their professional and personal commitments,” adds Associate Dean for Academic Affairs Adeline M. Nyamathi.

As the program progresses, the school’s faculty will keep close tabs on student retention and satisfaction, as well as learning outcomes. The school has already begun offering its nursing research course online, and has found that students who take the Web-based course do as well as the traditional students (see the accompanying story).

“We are proud to offer this option to our students,” says Dr. Mary Anne Schultz, director of online educational development for the Nursing Administration Graduate Program. “Times are changing and UCLA is right on the cusp of those changes, reacting to the realities of the marketplace and the needs of our students.”

eCollege.com provides technology and services, including faculty and administrative training, to enable universities to offer courses and programs online.

**SCHOOL’S RESEARCH SHOWS POTENTIAL FOR ONLINE LEARNING**

While nursing administration students enrolling next fall will be the first UCLA School of Nursing students with the option of pursuing their degree online, they won’t be the first at the school to engage in on-line learning.

The school launched an online version of N225, a graduate pharmacology course, in the spring of 1999. And since 1997, the school has offered its required graduate research course, N204, through the Internet. “Teaching via the Internet allows students to experience ‘learning on demand,’ increasing potential review or repeat of course material,” says Dr. Mary Woo, the faculty member who has taught the research course. “Thus, this type of instruction has the potential not only to increase course and school enrollment, but also to improve student learning and satisfaction.”

Since little research had been done to assess whether that potential was being realized, Woo conducted a study comparing learning and satisfaction among students who took N204 via the Internet vs. those who took the same course with traditional in-class teaching. The results were published in the *Journal of Professional Nursing* last year.

In the same six-week period, students in both the online and traditional lecture versions of the course received the same content and were graded based on identical midterm and final exams. Both groups took their exams at the same time; had the same required textbook, syllabus, and assigned readings; and had equal access to the same e-mail communication, online N204 course syllabus, and walk-in office hours with the course instructor and teaching assistant.

The scores on the exams were similar, with no difference in grades between the two groups. In ad-
dition, there were no significant differences between the two groups in overall course satisfaction. Although that bodes well for the future of online learning, Woo points out that there are other factors to consider. One is the need for technical support — which, she notes, places unfamiliar and sometimes unexpected demands on the educational institution. Interestingly, Woo also found that nearly three-fourths of the Internet students in N204 chose to attend at least some of the lectures, despite the fact that they weren’t required. “We noticed a dramatic increase in class attendance on days before the exams, indicating that these students were anxious about missing material that might be covered in the in-class lectures,” Woo explains. The Internet students also reported attending the class sessions because they enjoyed the lectures.

The UCLA School of Nursing has long been known for programs and curricula that are at the vanguard of nursing. And now, the school’s faculty can present cutting-edge nursing material from a state-of-the-art facility, the best-equipped auditorium on the UCLA campus.

The auditorium, located on the A-Level of the Louis Factor Building, underwent major renovation last summer and reopened for operation in the fall with state-of-the-art projection and sound, as well as videoconferencing capabilities.

“The students and faculty all love it,” says Director of Administration Janis Rosebrook, who managed the project, working with the school’s faculty, students and administration to get input on what was needed.

The new facility includes theater-style seating with padded chairs designed for maximum comfort. All 184 seats are equipped with electrical and Internet connections, so that anyone can bring a laptop computer and plug in to the World Wide Web.

A new sound system, enhanced by acoustical paneling, has been engineered to optimize the quality of sound and minimize ambient noises and distractions. “Previously, the sound would funnel from the back to the front, and faculty would hear everything from whispering to shuffling of papers,” Rosebrook explains. “Now, it’s the opposite, with the sound projecting from the front to the back.”

In addition, the auditorium features an audio-visual system with a huge screen — 20 feet wide by 7-and-a-half feet tall — on which the presenter can display any combination of two sources at once: computer-generated presentations, overhead projection, slide projection, VHS, and DVD. All media can be digitized and made available for video teleconferencing distribution. Presenters control everything from dual projection to lighting on a state-of-the-art podium that includes a dedicated network computer, pullout keyboard/mouse, and 15-inch monitor.

A special feature of the auditorium is the capacity to project the image of a “roving” speaker onto the screen. This is made possible through an “intelligent” necklace worn by the speakers that allows the cameras to follow them wherever they are in the room. The school can also connect to remote locations via videoconferencing for distance learning ventures, showing either the image on the screen, the speaker or the audience.

The foyer area just outside the auditorium includes chairs for overflow seating. There, ceiling-mounted speakers enable individuals to hear the speaker, and two 42-inch wall-mounted plasma screens replicate any material being presented in the auditorium. The design accommodates the needs of parents who must bring their infants to class.

The newly renovated School of Nursing Auditorium includes an audio-visual system with a large screen on which the presenter can display any combination of two media. Presenters control the dual projection and lighting on a state-of-the-art podium that includes a dedicated network computer.
Reach Out, Touch Someone
Telehealth Removes Barriers in Teaching, Care

Technology is increasingly breaking down barriers of time and distance in the delivery of health care. Indeed, the concept of telehealth has already made an appearance at the UCLA School of Nursing —and, while there are kinks to be worked out, it may well be part of the school’s future.

The shift of health care from hospital settings to the community has compelled institutions such as the School of Nursing to emphasize the gamut of community-based clinical settings in their programs. But the desire to teach students in diverse settings has created time and distance barriers that faculty may find difficult to overcome. So, beginning several years ago, the UCLA schools of nursing and medicine employed videoconferencing and store-and-forward technology to enable students to conduct assessments and physical examinations from remote clinical training sites, with faculty evaluating and consulting with them on campus at a later time.

At the end of the pilot project, students presented mixed evaluations, according to Dr. Betty Chang, who led the effort for the School of Nursing. “They didn’t feel they could learn as much from a teleconferencing interaction as they could in the clinic with the faculty being there with them,” she says. “But an overwhelming majority thought they would benefit from having this type of technology available in their clinical education.” Students were most positive about the technology’s potential to increase access to a wider range of clients than they might otherwise see during a clinical rotation.

Similarly, faculty were unimpressed with the use of videoconferencing for patient care rounds. But they were most positive with the ability to use store-and-forward technology to capture examples of significant cases or techniques for use in the classroom.

“Both students and faculty felt that this technology would be useful to capture aspects of patient care not readily available otherwise,” says Chang. “But for the more common conditions encountered in patient care, they would rather interact in person.”

As educators grapple with the best use of the technology, health plans have applied telehealth in another form, dramatically increasing the use of telephone advice services in which nurses field calls from clients. For the most part, these call centers have proliferated without data on the relationship between quality of care and consumer satisfaction. So, Chang, working with researchers at Kaiser Permanente, obtained data from seven after-hours call centers run by health maintenance organizations, preferred provider organizations, and private insurance companies.

More than 150 calls from adults with medical-surgical problems were taped with providers’ and callers’ consent. The quality of nursing in the calls was reviewed and follow-up information was obtained to ascertain the consumers’ perceptions of satisfaction, helpfulness, and follow-through with recommendations. “We wanted to see whether these nurses were following the nursing process of assessment, problem identification, care planning, intervention and evaluation,” says Chang. “And we did find that better interventions contributed to higher consumer satisfaction.”

Connections Pay Off

If, as many have said, the key to success is having connections, the UCLA School of Nursing is now in better shape than ever before.

The school has begun operating on a new high-speed computer network with state-of-the-art servers and new Gateway Pentium III computers that run at a speed of 933 MHz or more.

Under the UCLA Connected Model, the Office of the Chancellor and the Communications Technology Services department helped the school pay for a complete upgrade of the school’s network systems, and a high-speed connection to the campus network backbone. So, under the leadership of Director of Administration Janis Rosebrook and Network Manager James Kimmick, the school drew up a plan to install new servers, switching hubs and cables through all School of Nursing offices and classrooms. This now gives faculty, staff and students a powerful high-bandwidth connection with each other and the Internet.

Research, education and distance learning are all expected to benefit from the increased capabilities offered by the new high-speed connections. “Previously, our network was slow and not very stable,” says Rosebrook. “We’re now bringing it into the 21st century. The idea is to get the state of the art on everyone’s desk.”

“Our new network gives us 25 times the power of our old system, and will let our faculty and students work with large amounts of data quickly,” says Kimmick. “This will empower our research and educational programs, and allow new levels of collaboration both within UCLA and worldwide via the Internet.”
CLASS OF '60 CELEBRATES 40th ANNIVERSARY — The first formal reunion of the UCLA School of Nursing Class of 1960 was held last July 21-23. For the 36 class members who attended (out of a class of 43), it was a memorable weekend — a time of sharing and reconnecting in a meaningful way. Out of this reunion, a biographical booklet was compiled revealing the following composite sketch of the class:

- still active in nursing — 10;
- still working, other than nursing — 5;
- retired from nursing — 4;
- went on to get master’s degree in nursing — 4;
- earned master’s degrees in other fields — 7;
- and received Ph.D. in education — 1.

Other major accomplishments by class members have included establishing a first-of-its-kind program or position, serving vulnerable populations, getting appointed to the UCLA School of Medicine faculty, serving as president and executive director of a state nursing association, becoming a licensed pilot who flew air ambulances both as a nurse and as a pilot, serving as the only health professional on a remote Western Aleutian island, serving with charitable and/or religious organizations, and publishing articles.

CLASSES OF '56 AND '57, TOGETHER AGAIN — The Class of 1956 and the Class of 1957 got together last November for a combined reunion at the historic Stanley Hotel in Estes Park, Colo., gateway to Rocky Mountain National Park. The gathering of 26 included graduates and spouses of the school’s 1957 nursing class, as well as 1956 graduates who joined the group at the picturesque location. The “rocky” Colorado weather cooperated with beautiful sunny days and parades of local elk herds. Both classes have continued to meet every 2-3 years since graduating from the school, renewing bonds of lasting friendship.

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We’re Lost Without Our Alumni!

We need to update our files to make sure all our alumni are receiving this newsletter. Please let us know if you have a new address. Also, please jot down any professional or personal updates for use in future issues.

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