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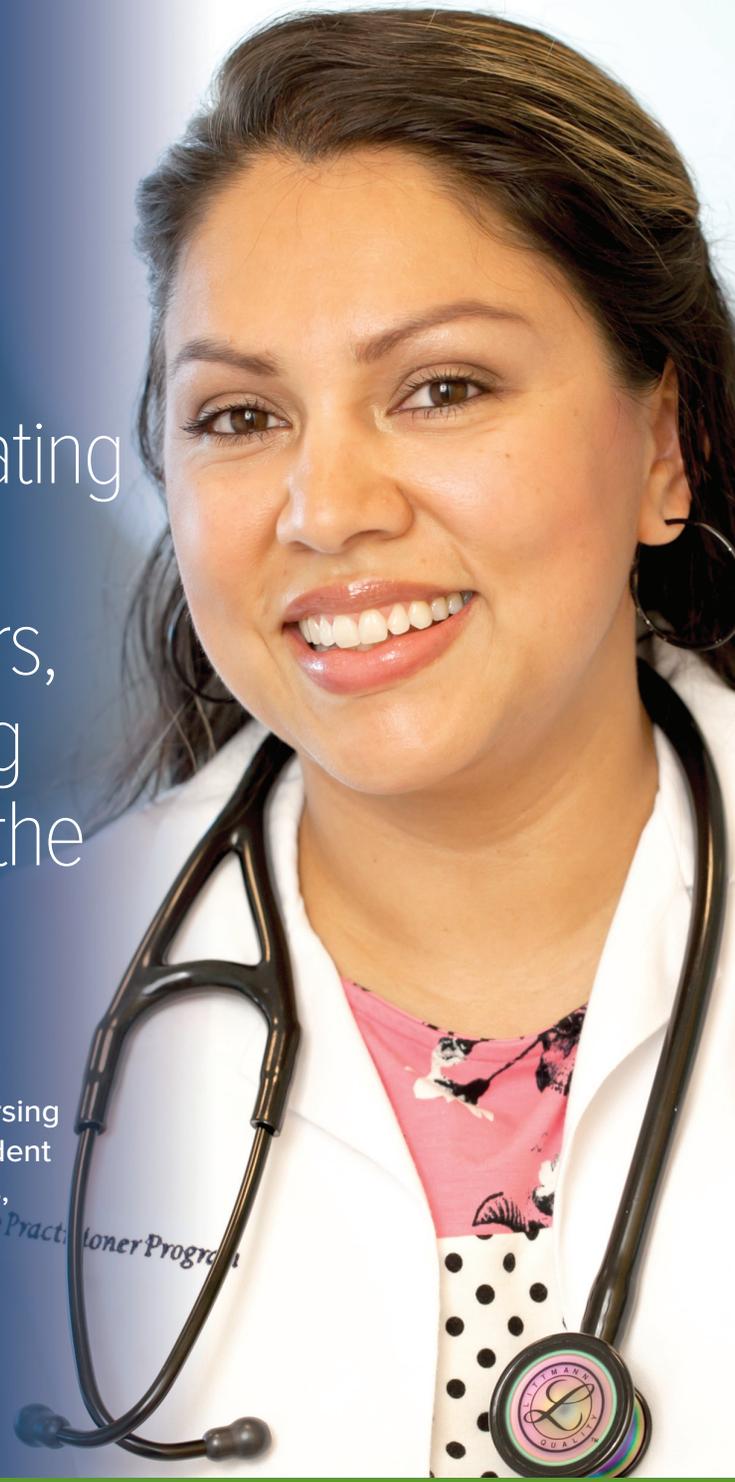
**UNLEASHING THE
POWER AND PASSION
OF NURSING**

UC DAVIS
BETTY IRENE MOORE
SCHOOL of NURSING

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Motivating
past
barriers,
hoping
to be the
new
norm

School of Nursing
graduate student
finds mentors,
purpose in
quest to care
for Hispanic
community



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SANDRA CALDERON'S DRIVE to succeed started at a young age and gained support from unsuspected sources. Ambition directed her to the U.S. Army. A desire to provide primary care for others within her Hispanic community drove her to pursue a nurse practitioner master's degree at the Betty Irene Moore School of Nursing at UC Davis and change the expectations of families she serves.

"I left El Salvador with my parents and came to Reno when I was three years old," Calderon recalled. "Neither of them had more than a junior-high level education and they only spoke Spanish. So I translated during their doctor visits, often having to talk about things that made me uncomfortable. My dad's cardiologist used to cut his visits short. My mom chose to return to El Salvador to see a doctor."

Despite the obstacles the language barrier presented, Calderon loved school. But her quest for learning clashed with her family's value of working and expectations that she contribute to the household income. From the age of 14, she worked at McDonald's. After graduating from high school and telling her parents she wanted to go to college, they informed her she would have to pay for it herself.

"So I enrolled in classes at a community college and kept working full time. Without a counselor to guide me or time to focus on my studies, my grades were bad and I lost my way," Calderon said. "Then an



Army recruiter reached out. One year later I was in basic training."

Calderon served on active duty for six years and trained as a dental hygienist.

"I loved the opportunity to learn about people's habits and help them improve their health," Calderon



explained. "With the Army paying for my education, I didn't have to work. I could focus 100 percent on my studies and I earned all A's."

Calderon ultimately earned a bachelor's degree in Nursing after she left the Army, the first person in

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her extended family to attend and graduate from college. Then, she enrolled at the School of Nursing.

"The Army taught me so much about being in a team and working together. The School of Nursing grows my confidence to engage with patients as faculty motivate me to ensure my success," Calderon said. "My clinical rotations in Spanish-speaking clinics were amazing. When patients' faces lit up, because a Spanish-speaking provider took time to listen to them, it's enough to quiet the sometimes negative feeling of anxiety and fear I have as a student."

"Students like Sandra serve as cultural brokers in the evolving state of health care. While they speak the language of underrepresented cultures, they also understand the cultural framework of their patients," explained Virginia Hass, assistant

clinical professor. "They also serve as role models for younger people in their communities and offer an example of what it is possible to achieve."

A mission of the School of Nursing is to prepare clinicians to deliver care in culturally inclusive ways. Developing the leadership and clinical skills of graduate students like Calderon furthers that goal and fills a gap in underserved areas where primary care is so desperately needed.

"Working in clinics where people are shocked to see a Spanish-speaking, Hispanic provider there to care for them sucks," Calderon said. "I don't want them to be surprised. I don't want to be the first or only one like me they experience. I want to be the norm."

Calderon hopes she can be an example for others in her community – those who want to break away from encumbering expectations and those who may not follow the traditional route of school.

"My advice to young Hispanic people who desire to do more with their lives is to find a mentor," Calderon said. "I wouldn't be here without people who took the time to listen, help and guide me. You may not find it in your family, but schools and colleges are more than willing to give you the opportunity, if you are willing to make it happen yourself."

PLEASE FEEL FREE to share this or contact us with any comments or questions. We welcome your feedback. For more information, visit nursing.ucdavis.edu or contact the School of Nursing at 916-734-2145 or at hs-BettyIreneMooreSON@ucdavis.edu.

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—Sandra Calderon, nurse practitioner master's degree student at the Betty Irene Moore School of Nursing