

momentum

Updates from the Betty Irene Moore School of Nursing

August 2026

DEAN'S WELCOME

From the Dean

This issue arrives at a meaningful moment in the life of the Betty Irene Moore School of Nursing.

As we conclude our 15th anniversary celebration and prepare to begin our 16th year, we find ourselves both honoring the foundation that brought us here and looking ahead to new opportunities. The stories in these pages reflect a school that continues to evolve, responding to workforce needs, investing in future leaders and building partnerships that improve health in communities throughout California and beyond.

That reflection is especially meaningful as we recognize the extraordinary contributions of our founding dean, Heather M. Young. After 18 years of service to UC Davis, [Heather is retiring from her faculty role](#), closing a remarkable chapter in the school's history. Her leadership helped transform an ambitious vision into a thriving institution built on innovation, interprofessional collaboration and a commitment to improving health outcomes. While she will continue leading the Betty Irene Moore Fellowship for Nurse Leaders and Innovators, this moment offers an opportunity to celebrate the lasting impact she has had on the school and its future.

Our final 15th anniversary feature, Fifteen Years In: Shaping What Comes Next, explores how the school is building on that foundation. Guided by a refreshed strategic plan focused on workforce development, innovation, partnerships and measurable impact, we are expanding pathways into health professions and preparing leaders equipped to meet California's evolving healthcare needs.

That commitment is reflected throughout this issue. You will read about [SHINES](#), our pathway program introducing local students to careers in healthcare, and a new nurse anesthesia preparatory course designed to help aspiring Certified

Registered Nurse Anesthetists explore the profession and prepare for advanced education.

We also highlight faculty achievements in research, scholarship and global engagement, including initiatives that advance health equity, support family caregivers and address complex health challenges affecting diverse populations.

Finally, you will meet alumni whose experiences demonstrate the lasting impact of nursing education and philanthropy. Through global learning opportunities in Kenya, students gain skills and perspectives that benefit patients and communities far beyond the classroom.

As we begin our 16th year, I am grateful for the faculty, staff, students, alumni, donors and partners who continue to strengthen our mission. Fifteen years have shown what is possible when vision and purpose come together. I look forward to all we will accomplish in the years ahead.

— **Stephen J. Cavanagh, Ph.D., M.P.A., R.N., F.A.C.H.E., F.A.A.N.**
Dean, Betty Irene Moore School of Nursing

FEATURE STORY



Founding dean Heather M. Young retires from UC Davis faculty

After 18 years of leadership at UC Davis, founding Dean Heather M. Young is retiring from faculty service at the Betty Irene Moore School of Nursing.

Young joined UC Davis in 2008 to help create a nursing school designed around leadership, innovation, interprofessional education and health systems change. She went on to guide the school through its launch, welcome its first students and establish a foundation that continues to shape its growth today.

Although she is stepping away from her faculty role, Young will continue serving as national program director of the Betty Irene Moore Fellowship for Nurse Leaders and Innovators. Fellowship leaders recognized her contributions during the program's recent convocation in Washington, D.C.

Current and founding school leaders reflect on Young's influence, her commitment to investing in people and the legacy she created at UC Davis.

[Read more about Young's impact](#)

EDUCATION NEWS



Teenagers move from curiosity to careers through SHINES, a UC Davis pathway into nursing

For two weeks in June, Sacramento area high school and early community-college students learned what a future in healthcare might look like. Now in its fifth year, the Summer Health Institute for Nursing Exploration and Success, or SHINES, offered 40 students hands-on simulations, mentoring and exposure to

nurses and other healthcare professionals as they explore potential careers. And the data indicates it's working.

Early results show 28 graduates about 20% of the first four cohorts — have become Certified Nursing Assistants (CNA), a key first step toward nursing. This June, 40 additional students completed SHINES, learning what nursing requires and how to see themselves in the role. And alumni from the program who are now pursuing professions in health care, came back to teach, mentor and show graduates what is possible.

[Read more about SHINES alumni](#)

Faculty from the DNP - Nurse Anesthesia degree program launch innovative new course

Faculty from the Doctor of Nursing Practice — Nurse Anesthesia Degree Program launched an online course, designed to prepare potential future applicants for nurse anesthesia education and a career in the nurse anesthesia profession.

In partnership with UC Davis Continuing and Professional Education, Professor Bryan Tune teaches this 12-week course that examines the CRNA profession and its history, anesthesia science, professional practice, doctoral level nurse anesthesia education and the associated application processes for entry into a program. Coursework is delivered via synchronous online sessions, mini-lectures, case-based learning, emotional intelligence assessment and training, interview coaching and guided discussion.

The inaugural class had an enrollment of 45 students and the course is progressing with great success. Student feedback has been excellent, and community involvement has been exciting. Current plans are to offer the course in the fall and summer quarters moving forward.

15 YEAR ANNIVERSARY

UC DAVIS
HEALTH

BETTY IRENE MOORE
SCHOOL OF NURSING

*Shaping
what's next in
health care*



Fifteen Years In: Shaping What Comes Next

Fifteen years of growth have transformed the Betty Irene Moore School of Nursing at UC Davis. Now, the final installment of the school's anniversary series looks ahead to a bigger question: How will that foundation help prepare the healthcare leaders California needs next?

The school enters its next chapter with 1,569 alumni, nearly 1,300 of whom have California addresses. Newer programs are responding directly to workforce gaps, while hybrid education is helping students train without leaving communities where healthcare providers are often scarce.

But preparing the future workforce means more than expanding programs. The school is investing in student support, scholarships and pathways that help talented learners succeed. Since 2010, nearly \$2.55 million in scholarships has supported 597 students.

A refreshed three-year strategic plan now sharpens the focus on workforce development, innovation, partnerships and measurable impact. Plans for a presence at Aggie Square could create even more opportunities to connect nursing education and research with healthcare, industry and community partners.

As a new class prepares to arrive and begin the school's 16th year, discover how 15 years of momentum are shaping what comes next.

[Read the full story](#)

RESEARCH NEWS



Betty Irene Moore Fellows share communications strategies to advance health and counter misinformation

At a time when misinformation is spreading rapidly and public trust is increasingly difficult to earn, nurse leaders have an important role to play in making health information clear, credible and compelling.

That challenge took center stage at the seventh annual Convocation of the Betty Irene Moore Fellowship for Nurse Leaders and Innovators, held June 23–28 in Washington, D.C. More than 50 fellows from five cohorts joined national nursing leaders, faculty and advisers for intensive learning focused on leadership, negotiation, strategic communication and policy influence.

For two days, fellows also connected with Hillman Scholars in Nursing Innovation and Hillman Foundation leaders, bringing more than 150 participants together for shared learning. Through sessions and collaboration, participants explored how nurses can communicate evidence more effectively, counter misleading narratives, engage communities and strengthen public trust — skills increasingly essential for leading change in healthcare.

[Read more about convocation](#)

RESEARCH BRIEFS

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IDEA grant supports new initiative to strengthen inclusive scholarship

Faculty from the Betty Irene Moore School of Nursing have received a \$15,000 grant from the Institute for Dissemination, Engagement, and Access (IDEA) Research Collective to support Health Equity Scholars Training in Action (HESTiA), an initiative designed to strengthen inclusive participation in scholarship through structured writing, mentorship and collaborative learning.

The IDEA proposal was developed by Associate Dean Piri Ackerman and Director for Inclusive Excellence Victoria Ngo, with support from Professor Jessica Draughon Moret and Assistant Professor Victoria Keeton. The project will examine how institutional conditions, such as access to mentorship, protected writing time and peer support, shape the scholarly experiences, professional development and sense of belonging of faculty and trainees.

As part of HESTiA, Ackerman and Ngo worked with Associate Dean for Research Jennifer Lingler to host a writing workshop that provided faculty and trainees with protected writing time, structured mentorship and peer support. The team anticipates HESTiA will strengthen scholarly collaboration and productivity while contributing to a more supportive academic environment.

Postdoctoral fellow awarded rural research award

Jeong Eun Kim, a Heather M. Young Post-Doctoral Fellow at the School of Nursing, has been awarded the 2026 Jeanette M. Spaulding in Rural Nursing Research Award for her proposal entitled, "Social Determinants of Health and Patients' Interpretation of Alzheimer's Biomarker Results In Rural Population." The award was established by former faculty Jeri Bigbee to support nurses who conduct research related to rural health.

Family Caregiving Institute presents research at international gerontology conference

Members of the Family Caregiving Institute presented research at the [23rd IAGG World Congress of Gerontology and Geriatrics](#), held July 5–8 in Amsterdam. Through two poster presentations and three oral presentations, faculty and staff shared findings on the needs of family caregivers and older adults. Topics included caregiver referral sources and unmet needs, equitable access to dementia-capable adult day services, the complexity of family caregiving, disability inclusion in age-friendly community planning and strategies to expand

Jessica Famula, Pauline Martinez and Rachael Fulp-Cooke. The presentations highlighted the breadth of the institute's work and its commitment to advancing evidence-informed policies, programs and services that support family caregivers and older adults in California and beyond.

Faculty present evidence-based work at international nursing research congress

Several School of Nursing faculty recently gave podium presentations at the [Sigma International Nursing Research Congress in Toronto](#). Assistant Professor Janet Meda's presentation focused on an evidence-based study highlighting mental health disparities and comorbidities among Kenyan women living with HIV, supporting integrated care models. Interprofessional teams of Kenyan physicians, mental health nurses and U.S. nurse practitioners strengthened screening and management of depression, anxiety, chronic disease and HIV-related effects. The project also offered insights into PHQ-9 and GAD-7 use in this population and enhanced shared training through academic partnerships. Dean Stephen Cavanagh and Professor Laura Van Auker presented "NGO & U.S./Kenyan Academic Multidisciplinary Teams Mitigate Health Impacts for HIV+ Women."

Professor joins international mental health journal

Professor Shu-Fen Wung has been invited to join the editorial board of the Formosa Journal of Mental Health. FJMH is a peer-reviewed academic journal published by the Mental Health Association in Taiwan. Shu-Fen will provide academic advice within their areas of expertise. Founded in 1984, the journal promotes interdisciplinary scholarship in mental health, including psychology, psychiatry, counseling, public health, nursing, social work, sociology, rehabilitation, criminology, family studies and related fields. The journal publishes both Chinese- and English-language articles.

[Read more faculty and research news](#)

DEVELOPMENT & ALUMNI



A global experience with a lasting impact

A global learning experience in Kenya gave family nurse practitioner Sandra Kamba more than new clinical skills. It strengthened her confidence, sharpened her ability to adapt care to limited resources and changed how she approaches patients today.

Through the Betty Irene Moore School of Nursing's long-standing partnerships with the University of Nairobi and HEART, students and faculty work alongside Kenyan clinicians in mobile clinics and community health screenings. The experience is designed as a true exchange: UC Davis learners gain insight into culturally responsive, resource-conscious care while supporting Kenyan partners as the advanced practice nursing role continues to grow.

Donor support makes these opportunities possible for students who may otherwise be unable to participate. As faculty member Laura Van Auker notes, every gift is multiplied through the patients those students will serve throughout their careers.

[Read the full story](#)



Support our crowdfunding campaign: UC Davis–Kenya Global Health Impact Fund

Global learning experiences give future healthcare providers skills and perspectives they carry throughout their careers. Through the UC Davis–Kenya Global Health Impact Fund, students gain hands-on experience that builds confidence, critical thinking and adaptability while strengthening patient-centered care.

[Beginning October 1, you can support](#) the Betty Irene Moore School of Nursing's crowdfunding campaign and help more students take part in these transformative experiences. Your gift extends far beyond one trip, influencing the care our graduates provide to patients and communities for years to come.

[Make a gift](#)

ADMISSIONS

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Applications are open now

- **Doctor of Nursing Practice — Nurse Anesthesia** – [Apply by November 1](#) to join the June 2027 cohort
- **Master's Entry Program in Nursing** – [Apply by November 1](#) to join the June 2027 cohort
- **UC Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner Certificate Program** – [Apply by November 1](#) to join the June 2027 cohort

Coming soon: Applications open in September

- [Doctor of Nursing Practice — Family Nurse Practitioner](#)
- [PhD in Nursing Science and Health-Care Leadership](#)

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