

**Office of the President**

**TO MEMBERS OF THE ACADEMIC AND STUDENT AFFAIRS COMMITTEE:**

**ACTION ITEM**

*For Meeting of January 25, 2017*

**ESTABLISHMENT OF A SCHOOL OF NURSING, IRVINE CAMPUS**

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The University of California, Irvine (UCI) proposes to establish the Sue and Bill Gross School of Nursing from its existing Program in Nursing Science (PNS). Establishment of the school is supported by an unprecedented gift to UCI of \$40 million from the Gross Family Foundation.

Elevating the PNS to school status has been included in the university's master academic and financial plans for nearly ten years. The PNS has been functioning as an independent unit like other UCI schools. The unit has reported directly to the provost since 2009 when establishment of a school of nursing was put on hold due to major institutional budget cuts. Since that time, the PNS has developed strategically and appropriately, and has built strong academic programs and a solid infrastructure.

In addition to fulfilling the terms of the naming gift agreement, developing the school is well-aligned with UCI's strategic plan and the mission of the University of California. The proposal emphasizes a clear and growing need to create a pipeline of nurses and nursing faculty educated at the doctoral level; improve the quality and breadth of the University's current academic programs in nursing science; ensure the program's successful accreditation; and expand the faculty's extensive community engagement in promoting health and preventing disease. The Sue and Bill Gross School of Nursing will enrich a highly regarded university that includes top-rated schools, research centers, and an academic health center – UC Irvine Health.

The supporting rationale for the change to school status rests on several important facts. As a professional discipline in universities across the nation, academic nursing is organized in independent schools or colleges. Like those other nursing programs and other schools at UCI, the current PNS has: (1) robust, nationally accredited academic programs, (2) strong, well-respected program faculty, (3) a mission that involves extensive community engagement for promoting community health, and (4) an administrative structure similar to that of a school. Finally, of the 31 public Association of American Universities institutions nationwide, only UCI is designated

as a program rather than a school or college, despite parallel programming and administrative structures. This discrepancy was highlighted and questioned by national nursing accreditors during their fall 2015 review of UCI's nursing programs.

Approval of this school proposal would benefit the University by enhancing faculty and student recruitment; achieving the goals of the UCI strategic plan, UC Irvine Health strategic plan, and UC Health mission; enhancing capacity for additional extramural support; and affirming that UCI's academic nursing structure and programming are parallel with UCI's peer and aspirant peer institutions.

The proposal for the Sue and Bill Gross School of Nursing has been endorsed by the Irvine Division of the Academic Senate and by the systemwide Academic Council.

### **RECOMMENDATION**

The President of the University recommends that the Academic and Student Affairs Committee recommend to the Regents that Section 15 (a) of the Academic Units and Functions, Affiliated Institutions, and Related Activities of the University, as provided for in Standing Order 110.1, be amended as follows:

#### **Additions shown by underscoring**

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#### **15. Professional Schools**

- (a) There are established the following schools, with curricula based on two or more years of undergraduate work as well as graduate curricula as listed:

\* \* \*

- Sue and Bill Gross School of Nursing, at Irvine, with curricula leading to the degrees of Bachelor of Science, Master of Science, and Doctor of Philosophy and to a Post-Master's Nurse Practitioner Certificate.

## **BACKGROUND**

Three key factors support the establishment of the Sue and Bill Gross School of Nursing at UCI: academic rigor of current educational programs and research; financial viability of the proposed structure; and fit within the campus and system priorities.

### ***Academic Rigor***

Parameters of academic performance and rigor in the PNS are demonstrated by (1) the productivity and accomplishments of UCI nursing faculty and students; (2) the accomplishments of UCI faculty compared to nursing faculty at peer institutions identified by Academic Analytics; (3) the National Council Licensure Examination and national certification passing rates for undergraduate and master's nurse practitioner programs respectively; and (4) successful program reviews for State licensure approval and national accreditation status. In addition, the program's talented students are active, recognized leaders in regional and national professional organizations.

UCI is home to four academic programs in nursing science: Bachelor of Science (B.S.), Master of Science (M.S.), Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.), and Post-master's Nurse Practitioner Certificate Program (PMNPCP). The PNS began in 2007 with a B.S. program, but quickly expanded in 2009 to include an M.S. in Nursing Science degree program and the PMNPCP, and in 2013 a Ph.D. program. An Entry Level Master's (ELM) track within the existing M.S. program has been developed and will begin enrolling students fall 2017, and a Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) degree program proposal is under development. The B.S., M.S., and the PMNPCP are all approved by the California Board of Registered Nursing and accredited by the national accreditation agency, the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education.

The undergraduate program in nursing is one of the most selective majors at UCI; over the past several years, the number of applicants to the B.S. program has steadily grown such that the campus received over 2,450 applications in fall 2016 for 40 freshman openings. Nursing science is now the fifth largest undergraduate applicant pool at UCI. The competitive nature of the program means that the 197 PNS students enrolled this past fall are among the most highly qualified applicants to the institution. Likewise, graduate nursing programs also attract well-prepared students. Currently UCI has 42 students in its master's and doctoral degree programs.

UCI's Ph.D. program is built on a translational science interdisciplinary model and is supported by nursing faculty as well as many faculty from other schools across the Irvine campus. This multi-disciplinary approach has greatly enhanced the educational opportunities for nursing students. The doctoral program heavily emphasizes research with a real-world impact for public health or for the health of individual patients, their families, and their communities.

PNS faculty are engaged in many interdisciplinary research collaborations across the general campus and with their colleagues in the College of Health Sciences. Faculty partner with researchers in the School of Medicine, Institute for Clinical and Translational Science, School of Social Ecology, Francisco Ayala School of Biological Sciences, and the Claire Trevor School of the Arts, among others. These collaborations have been highly productive, leading to research that has had a significant scientific impact, engagements that have elevated important community-based research, and highly regarded innovations in research addressing care delivery. To date, PNS faculty have generated more than \$10 million from extramural sources, including significant research with grants from the National Institutes of Health, to support research and scholarly clinical education at UCI.

The PNS faculty of 36 is composed currently of 11 Academic Senate full-time equivalent (FTE) positions, eight full-time and two part-time health sciences clinical professors, 15 health sciences clinical instructors, and three emerita Senate faculty who remain engaged in the program. The campus also recently hired a director/founding dean of nursing science with an appointment beginning in January 2017. Four open Senate faculty FTE positions provide a critical opportunity for the new leader to shape the direction and goals for the school.

### ***Financial Viability***

The UC Irvine Sue and Bill Gross School of Nursing has a strong fiscal foundation. The PNS has demonstrated financial stability since its inception, with campus allocations and State funds, in addition to revenue from continuing education fees, professional school fees, self-supporting programs, and sponsored projects, and the \$40 million naming gift from the Gross Family Foundation.

UCI has committed resources to support faculty and staff growth as new nursing programs are established. Carryforward funds exceeding \$2.3 million have been earmarked for specific projects including development of the DNP program, merit scholarships for Ph.D. students, start-up funds for faculty recruitment, and establishment of an endowment for the founding dean. In order to maintain the high quality of PNS' academic programs, it is critical that faculty lines grow alongside student growth. Six new faculty FTE will be hired at a rate of one per year beginning in 2021. Two additional clinical DNP faculty will be hired through the new DNP program revenues. To serve the growing need for primary care services in the community, a nurse-managed clinic is scheduled to launch in 2021. Clinic providers will serve as preceptors for students in clinical rotations while also providing urgent care, and health and wellness visits to the community. The budget includes nine new clinical faculty who will support the B.S., ELM, and Ph.D. programs; therefore, the FTE are planned in alignment with enrollment growth and fee generation.

The Sue and Bill Gross Nursing and Health Sciences Hall will give the PNS community space and capacity to design new programs and initiatives that prepare the next generation of nurse researchers, educators, and clinicians. The school's extended enrollment plan includes adding 25 undergraduates, 110 master's-level students, 53 students in the new professional doctoral program, and more than 20 Ph.D. students.

***Fit within Campus and System Priorities***

Establishment of a school of nursing at UCI has long been consistent with the UC's charge to offer high-quality doctoral degrees, as well as systemwide interest in increasing enrollment in professional schools. In fact, the UC system plan for growth in the health professions includes the vision for a UCI school of nursing, which has been in the campus' *Five Year Planning Perspectives* since the inception of the program ten years ago.

The nursing profession is the largest segment of the healthcare workforce and, as such, nursing is expected to play a leading role in transforming the healthcare delivery system over the next 20 years. The demand for professional nurses with graduate degrees to lead this change and educate the next generations of nursing professionals is projected to grow substantially as the aging nursing faculty workforce retires. At present, California is ranked 45th out of 50 states for per capita nursing workforce. The UC system, with sole authority to offer the Ph.D., is well-positioned to provide the graduate education required to meet the state's demand for academic nurses, as well as the undergraduate education required to create a pipeline of entry-level nursing professionals who will go on to get their graduate degrees.

The creation of the Sue and Bill Gross School of Nursing at UCI is fully in concert with the stated overall goals of the University of California system, will complement programs on other campuses, and will enhance the quality of nursing education throughout the state.

***Reviews and Approvals***

The proposal for the Sue and Bill Gross School of Nursing has been reviewed and recommended for approval on the UC Irvine campus and subsequently at the Office of the President, following all required procedures. These rigorous procedures involve committees of the Academic Senate on the campus and systemwide, and the responsible academic leaders at UC Irvine and UC Office of the President, culminating with the recommendation for approval from the UC Irvine Chancellor and finally, from the UC President.

**Key to Acronyms**

DNP	Doctor of Nursing Practice
ELM	Entry Level Master's
FTE	full-time equivalents
PMNPCP	Post-master's Nurse Practitioner Certificate Program
PNS	Program in Nursing Science