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School of Nursing weighs program expansion

February 18, 2009 -- The School of Nursing has been funded by the Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation to study the feasibility of expansion of the School's master's cohort program. The \$450,486 grant from the Foundation also supports an increase in the number of cohort students this fall.



Practicing nurses at the Stanford Lucile Packard Children's Hospital study for their master's degrees as a cohort on hospital and SF State campuses.

The School of Nursing master's cohort program prepares clinical nurse specialists. Classes are divided between clinical studies at a hospital and business management and administration course work on the SF State campus. The majority of nurses in the existing cohort are practicing at Stanford Hospital and the Lucile Packard Children's Hospital (Stanford/Packard). The feasibility study will determine if it is practical to expand the program to other Bay Area hospitals.

"We expect the feasibility study will indicate the need to expand our cohort program to more hospitals, initially in the South Bay and on the Peninsula," said Amy Nichols, associate professor of nursing and coordinator of the program at Stanford/Packard. "We want to start a class of students every year instead of every other year as is the case now." She notes that there are hundreds of nursing vacancies at hospitals in California and across the country because these are administrative, management and teaching positions that require a master's degree. According to a 2006 Board of Registered Nursing report, only 11 percent of nurses in California have master's

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degrees.

The feasibility study will also explore how the School of Nursing can expand its revenue base. "This grant from the Moore Foundation comes at a critical time," said Professor and Director of the School of Nursing Shirley Girouard. "The current crisis in state and federal budgeting requires us to create a business case for graduate nursing education and find alternate sources of funding. This is also an excellent opportunity for us to assess the effectiveness of the School's training programs on health care systems in general."

The studies will be conducted by a consultant working with an advisory committee of medical professionals from Stanford/Packard, El Camino, Alta Bates and Sequoia hospitals and the School of Nursing.

Girouard said the studies would help make SF State's cohort hospital-university partnership a model for other educational institutions seeking to assess their markets and plan future programs.

-- [Denize Springer](#)



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