

Investing in Their Future – and Ours

WITH THE COST OF PURSUING A GRADUATE DEGREE ON THE RISE, SPH STEPS UP EFFORTS TO ASSIST TALENTED CANDIDATES.



The Smart Money Is Supporting the School's Students

The generosity and vision of two people she never knew gave Kristin Elizabeth Yarris (above) the impetus to pursue her Ph.D. in the UCLA School of Public Health's Department of Community Health Sciences.

Yarris, who completed her M.P.H. at the school and M.A. in Latin American Studies last spring, was nominated for and awarded a fellowship from the Bette and Hans Lorenz Endowment Fund. The financial support was instrumental in her decision to enroll in the school's Ph.D. program. Once she has completed her required coursework, Yarris, who has spent the last three summers working with non-governmental health organizations in Central America and Brazil, plans to conduct her field research in Latin America, seeking to better understand how community-based organizations respond to health problems using community organization- and popular education-based approaches.

At a time of escalating costs and intense competition from other public health schools and other professions for the top students, Yarris provides one of many illustrations of the importance of financial support in attracting the best candidates to the UCLA School of Public Health's graduate programs.

"I had always intended to pursue an M.S.W. degree and become a licensed social worker," says Yarris, who entered the M.P.H. program with an eight-year

professional background working with community-based nonprofit organizations in health and social services. “But I was drawn to public health because I believe the field provides the tools to address some of the underlying causes of ill health and other social problems. Receiving the Lorenz fellowship has in large part made possible the first year of my Ph.D. program.”

“Ensuring that we continue to be able to enroll the best students in the country has always been a high priority for our school, but it’s even more important now in light of rising tuition costs and the inability of the state government to provide support at the levels people had come to expect in the past,” says Dr. Linda Rosenstock, dean of the UCLA School of Public Health. “It’s very difficult for most students to make it through school without financial support, and we want to be there to help them.”

In recent years, the school’s efforts in this area have paid off: Financial support has increased at a rate that has surpassed students’ rising costs. In particular, merit-based support has gone up substantially, as federal funding, private donations and grant support for graduate student researchers and teaching assistants have boosted the school’s efforts to attract and retain the most talented students.

Support for UCLA School of Public Health students comes from a wide variety of sources – from individual faculty members, from the school’s five departments, and school-wide through the Dean’s Office. Approximately half of the school’s total support is need-based, in the form of employment, loans and financial aid, awarded based on economic considerations. The other half is merit-based, a category that includes private awards; research and teaching assistantships, including those from contracts and grants awarded to faculty; UCLA Graduate Division support; and federal funding in the form of traineeship programs, including the UCLA-Fogarty AIDS International Training and Research Program, the Southern California NIOSH Education and Research Center, the UCLA/RAND Health Services Research Training Program, Biostatistics Training for AIDS Research, the Interdisciplinary Maternal and Child Health Training Program, the Pacific Public Health Training Center, and others.

“Most forms of support available to students come with some type of work- or service-related expectation,” says Dr. Gerald F. Kominski, the school’s associate dean for academic programs, “but the great thing about this arrangement is that while students are receiving assistance that helps them get through school, they’re also typically working on a project related to their field of interest. It’s a win-win situation.” In addition to the federally funded traineeships and opportunities to work on faculty research proj-

ects, students can apply to one of several internship programs offered through gifts from private donors, including the Max Factor Foundation, Wilshire Foundation, and Monica Salinas programs.

As of 2002-03, nearly three-fifths of the school’s students – 58% – were receiving merit-based aid, with an average award of \$17,331 per year. When factoring in need-based financial aid, more than four-fifths – 83% – were receiving some form of support, at an average annual level of \$24,117. While the proportion getting some type of aid has remained steady in recent years, the amount of funding per student has risen considerably.

“We’re doing increasingly well, particularly over the last few years,” says Kominski. “But with fees set to go up rapidly, we face growing challenges and we’re going to have to work even harder to continue meeting our students’ needs.”

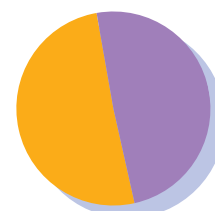
Constance Gewa became interested in the school’s doctoral program when, while working toward her master’s degree in applied nutrition at the University of Nairobi in Kenya, she met Dr. Charlotte Neumann, a professor who has conducted nutrition-related research in Kenya for more than two decades. Gewa worked on Neumann’s study of the effects of animal-source foods on the growth and cognitive development of children and realized that a doctorate from the UCLA School of Public Health could give her tools to better address nutritional problems in her native country. She applied and was accepted to the school’s doctoral program, but knew that without financial support, the dream would be unobtainable: Gewa lacked adequate funds to cover tuition, out-of-state-fees, and living costs.

Thanks to the support she received through the Eleanor J. De Benedictis Fellowship in Nutrition, Gewa is at the school, focusing on international health with a special interest in human nutrition. “I really appreciate the support I’ve gotten from this fellowship,” she says. “It has covered my out-of-state fees and helped me to be able to afford the costs of childcare services for my young daughter so that I can enroll in courses and have time for studying.”

UCLA’s Graduate Division estimates that in 2002-03, the cost of attending graduate school at UCLA for California residents was \$23,000 per year. For non-residents like Gewa, it was nearly \$38,000. Tuition, fees and books are only a small part of those figures, which also include living expenses in a city in which housing costs are high. Moreover, these figures don’t take into account full-time work

RUTH FARNAN RICHARDS, a long-time member of the school’s Department of Community Health Sciences and the namesake of a scholarship for students, died in September at the age of 87. As a public health educator, Richards educated civilians and physicians in India, Yugoslavia, and South America through the World Health Organization. She was active in the Society for Public Health Education, serving as its president in 1984. The Ruth F. Richards Outstanding Student Award is given at the school each year in her honor.

**SCHOOL OF
PUBLIC HEALTH
TOTAL FINANCIAL AID,
2002-03
\$12,878,218**



**Total Merit-Based
\$6,533,946**

**Total Need-Based
\$6,344,272**



Kynna Wright (r.) is supported by a California Endowment fellowship in her research on disparities in access and use of services among children with asthma.

income that many students sacrifice in order to dedicate themselves to their studies.

To ease these burdens, the school has stepped up its efforts to gain additional support for students through foundations and the generosity of private donors. In addition, Rosenstock has identified student support as a priority for donations to the school's Annual Fund. And finally, a sharp rise in faculty research productivity has brought in critical support

for students who can work as paid researchers through grants. Since 1996, the school's support for graduate student researchers has increased by 62%.

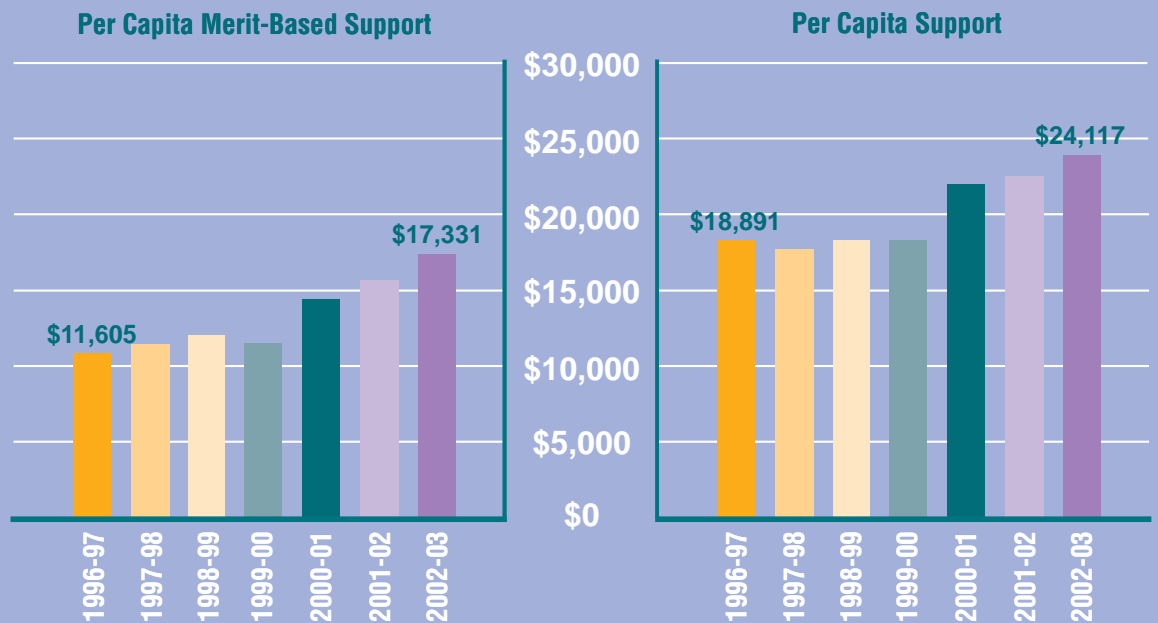
"The net effect is that we are supporting students at unprecedented levels," Rosenstock says.

Rosenstock is the principal investigator on two major grants for student support that have come from The California Endowment and California Wellness Foundation, and oversees students whose internships are funded through a gift from Dr. Monica Salinas. In different ways, all three programs not only support students, but strengthen the school's capacity to address health disparities among underserved communities and bring greater diversity to the public health profession.

"My scholarship is directed toward students who are interested in learning about how public health issues are managed within minority communities and in Latin America. I believe that my contribution helps them acquire valuable information that they can then incorporate into their work and research," says Salinas, who received the Dean's Award last June in recognition of her sustained and generous support for students. "Providing support to UCLA School of Public Health students is extremely rewarding," she adds. "Students receive the best education possible to prepare them to make tangible and lasting contributions to improve the health of our community, country and world."

A California Wellness Foundation fellowship made a major positive impact on the educational experience for Ignacio Ferry (M.P.H. '04, M.A.),

SCHOOL OF PUBLIC HEALTH PER CAPITA FINANCIAL AID, 1996-2003



In 2002-03, 58.3% received merit-based aid, and 83.3% received any support.



who, while pursuing joint master's degrees in public health and Latin American studies, was also working part-time and tending to his obligations as a husband and father of two children, both born while he was in graduate school.

"Because of the fellowship, I could be less focused on financial constraints and was able to devote time to organizing events through my involvement with the Students of Color for Public Health," says Ferry, 2003-04 co-chair of the group, which provides social, academic and professional support to the school's students and alumni of color. Among other things, Ferry helped to put together activities focused on encouraging high school and undergraduate students to consider public health careers, as well as forums to raise issues of concern specific to underserved populations. He is now working in adolescent health and youth development with the Restorative Justice Program of the Bill Wilson Center, a nonprofit organization in the San Francisco Bay area whose mission is to support and strengthen the community by serving youth and families through counseling, housing, education and advocacy.

For Kynna Wright, The California Endowment fellowship has been critical to her ability to focus on her doctoral studies, in which she is exploring disparities in access and utilization of health care services among children with asthma. "Without this funding, I would have had to work a lot more, and it would have slowed the process down considerably," says Wright, whose future plans include political advocacy and policy development addressing health problems facing women and children of color.

Despite the many forms of support now available to students, there is no room for complacency, says Natasha Brown Levy, the school's manager of student affairs. "With tuition and fees expected to go up dramatically in the next few years, our students will continue to face hardships in their efforts to get the education that will help them become our future public health leaders," she notes. "Our ability to stay ahead of the curve in terms of the level of support we can provide will go a long way toward ensuring that the UCLA School of Public Health remains able to attract the quality of students that its reputation as a nationally renowned school warrants."

"Student support will continue to be one of our school's highest priorities," says Rosenstock. "Now more than ever, we are looking to our alumni and friends to continue helping us as we strive to maintain what we believe to be the best caliber of students of any public health school."

The Eleanor J. De Benedictis Fellowship in Nutrition enabled Constance Gewa (above right) to come to the school from Kenya for her doctoral education.

EXAMPLES OF PRIVATE SOURCES OF STUDENT SUPPORT, 2003-04*

ABDELMONEM A. AFIFI STUDENT FELLOWSHIP

FRED H. BIXBY SUMMER INTERNSHIPS

CELIA AND JOSEPH BLANN FELLOWSHIP

THE CALIFORNIA ENDOWMENT

CALIFORNIA WELLNESS FOUNDATION

ELEANOR J. DE BENEDICTIS ENDOWMENT FELLOWSHIP IN NUTRITION

DEAN'S OUTSTANDING STUDENT AWARD

NEUMANN-DRABKIN INTERNATIONAL FIELD FELLOWSHIPS

MAX FACTOR FAMILY FOUNDATION INTERNSHIP PROGRAM

LENOR GOERKE AWARD FOR GENERAL EXCELLENCE

RAYMOND GOODMAN SCHOLARSHIP

BETTE AND HANS LORENZ ENDOWMENT FUND

TONY NORTON MEMORIAL FELLOWSHIP

ANN G. QUEALY MEMORIAL FELLOWSHIP ENDOWMENT

MONICA SALINAS INTERNSHIP IN LATINO AND LATIN AMERICAN HEALTH

SCHOOL OF PUBLIC HEALTH ALUMNI ASSOCIATION

RUTH F. RICHARDS OUTSTANDING STUDENT AWARD

JUNEAL MARIE SMITH FELLOWSHIP IN INTERNATIONAL NUTRITION

STEP UP AWARDS (LEGACY/ASPH)

THAI HEALTH OUTREACH

WAYNE SOOHOO SCHOLARSHIP

SAMUEL J. TIBBITTS FELLOWSHIP

BETTY S. WILLIAMS SCHOLARSHIP

WILSHIRE FOUNDATION ENDOWMENT INTERNSHIP PROGRAM IN GERIATRIC MEDICINE AND LONG-TERM CARE

**There are many other forms of support available to UCLA School of Public Health students, including support from the school's departments and from individual faculty members through contracts and grants.*