New School of Nursing Building Dedicated, Unveiled At Ceremony

By Rick Gloady

Before a large crowd of faculty, staff, students and alumni, CSULB officially dedicated the campus’ new School of Nursing Building, a $4.3 million project that is the first addition to the university’s nursing facilities since 1975.

With nearly 10,600 gross square feet, the new building includes teaching labs, a computer lab, faculty and administrative offices and support spaces for the School of Nursing. Construction on the project was completed at the beginning of the fall semester, and students will begin attending classes in the building next spring semester.

“You don’t know how happy I am,” said Loucine Huckabay, director of the CSULB School of Nursing, when she took to the podium. “This is indeed a day we have been waiting for many years, and this day was made possible through the efforts of many individuals, families and our wonderful service partners.”

“This is the place where professional nurses will be educated to transform the healthcare delivery system and meet the challenges of reform for the betterment of patient care,” Huckabay explained. “As the largest component of the healthcare workforce, nurses are uniquely positioned to be in the forefront and take charge to ensure that acceptable, high quality care is available to all of our nation’s diverse populations.”

Photo by David J. Nelson
On hand for the ribbon-cutting event to dedicate the new CSULB School of Nursing Building were (l-r) CSULB President F. King Alexander, CSULB Nursing Alumni Dr. Vivianne Lokken, School of Nursing Director Loucine Huckabay, senior nursing student Laura Speth and Ken Millar, dean for the CSULB College of Health and Human Services.
Dean Ken Millar of the College of Health and Human Services opened up the event by saying that “a new era of nursing education at Cal State Long Beach has arrived.” Millar also noted how the need for new space became increasingly urgent for the School of Nursing in January 2004, when the school quadrupled its enrollment overnight as a result of support the program received from three of its service partners—Long Beach Memorial Medical Center, Hoag Memorial Hospital Presbyterian and Long Beach VA Medical Center.

“Anytime we get the chance to do a ribbon-cutting on a new building, it is a great day for our university,” said CSULB President F. King Alexander. “But more importantly, any time we can do this in the type of horrific economy we’ve been dealing with is even more significant.”

Alexander pointed out the unintended, general “health” theme of the university’s three large construction projects that will open within a year of one another, including the Student Recreation and Wellness Center that opened this fall and next fall’s anticipated opening of the campus’ new Hall of Science Building. The School of Nursing Building, however, has its own significance.

“This facility was put together with the help of some private resources, and our Long Beach Memorial Hospital, Hoag Hospital and Long Beach Veterans Hospital partners have played an integral role in making sure this building happened,” Alexander noted. “It also helped that Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger put $6 million on the table about three or four years ago. We were able to go up there and grabbed half of that as quickly as we could, and that’s why this building sits here today—a combination of private support, our corporate/hospital support and the support of that special state fund.”

Before actually cutting the ribbon on the new facility, Huckabay thanked a number of individuals for making the new nursing space possible, including President Alexander and Provost Don Para for valuing nursing as an important discipline within our university.

She also acknowledged thanked Lyman and Dr. Vivianne Lokken, who together have dedicated a great deal of time and effort on behalf of the nursing program and other CSULB entities. In particular, Huckabay explained how Lyman accompanied her to every meeting with the architect and provided valuable input into the design and construction of the the building; Dr. Lokken, an alumna and president of the Nursing Alumni Association, has been instrumental in getting the alumni involved.

Huckabay thanked the school’s service partners for their generosity, including Dr. Barry Arbuckle, president of Memorial Care; Judy Fix, chief nursing officer and vice president for patient care at Long Beach Memorial; Rick Martin, chief nursing officer and senior vice president for Hoag Memorial Hospital Presbyterian; and Isabel Duff director of the VA Medical Center in Long Beach, as well as her predecessor Ron Norby.

Finally, she gave special thanks to the Zamost family, who said gave her the first fundraising experience on behalf of the new building. The family approached the school to set up a student scholarship fund on behalf of their mother, Regina Zamost, who was a nurse. After speaking with Huckabay about the need the new building, the family doubled its gift to support the scholarship and help fund the building.

Huckabay also shared some statistics that she presented in Sacramento in October when she testified in front of the Commission of the Office of State Health Planning and Development about how CSULB’s family nurse practitioner students and graduates provide primary care and make care accessible to California’s diverse and underserved populations.

“To give you a couple of statistics, 67 percent of our undergraduate students are underrepresented minorities, and for the majority of them English is a second language. At the graduate level, 40 percent of our students are
underrepresented minorities,” Huckabay pointed out. “What is so wonderful is that upon graduation, 67 percent of our graduates choose to work in underserved areas. You could not ask for a better investment.

“This building,” she continued, “is being dedicated today to educate and produce more undergraduate and graduate nursing students to meet the healthcare needs of our society and make healthcare accessible to all.”

When enrollment expanded in 2004 as a result of the support from its industry partners, the School of Nursing had approximately 870 nursing students, but there were only two classrooms to serve them, the largest of which held 30 students. The new nursing building includes three more classrooms and a computer lab to serve these students.

“For more than 50 years, Cal State Long Beach’s nursing alumni have made an impact on the profession and are affiliated with many of the top medical centers, hospitals, private organizations and universities,” said Dr. Lokken, who spoke after Huckabay. “Because of their influence in the nursing profession, our alumni have been long advocates of teaching and learning facilities. What better way to honor our graduates than to have a state-of-the-art facility to welcome new students into our family.”

Since 2006, CSULB’s nursing alumni have raised more than $69,000 for this facility, Lokken noted. She also announced at the event that the CSULB Nursing Alumni Association was making a lead gift today of $10,000 for the new School of Nursing Building.

“This new facility will allow us to expand our programs and to fill a tremendous need that exists in nursing today,” Lokken said. “This new building will help to advance CSULB’s stature as one of the preeminent schools of nursing in the region, state and nation.”

CSULB got approval for the nursing building addition from the CSU Board of Trustees in September 2008 and broke ground on the project in October 2009. The addition was funded in part by a 2007 state appropriation of $2.3 million for preliminary plans, working drawings, construction and equipment. The rest of the funding came from donations to the School of Nursing.