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### Authors

Phillips, Gerard, DNP, MBA, RN

McPherson, Gwendolyn, MPA, MSN, RN, CNS

Lizarraga, Bea, MSN, RN-BC, NE-BC

et al.

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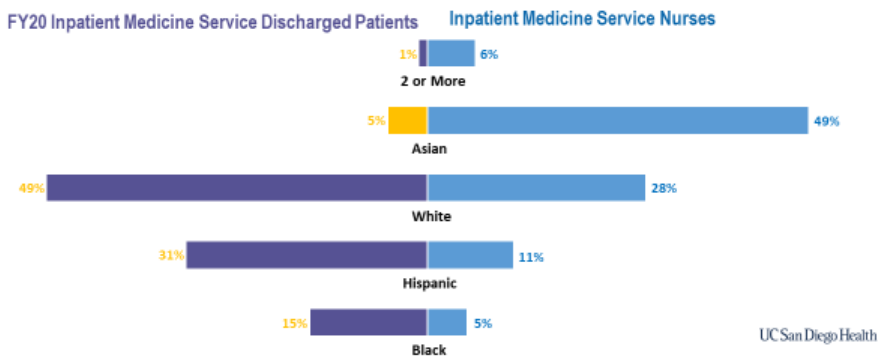
# The Unique Diversity, Retention, Equity, Aspire Mentor (DREAM) Student Nurse Externship Program

Authors: Gerard Phillips DNP, MBA, RN, Gwendolyn McPherson MPA, MSN, RN, CNS, Bea Lizarraga MSN, RN-BC, NE-BC, Genesis Bojorquez, Genesis Bojorquez PhD, RN, NE-BC, PCCN

The Future of Nursing Report 2020-2030 by the National Academy of Medicine indicates that the nursing workforce does not reflect the US population. Literature demonstrates repeatedly when patients can see themselves in their healthcare providers, connections are formed that optimize health outcomes (Bonini & Matias, 2021; Gomez & Bernet, 2019) UC San Diego Health (UCSDH), mirrors these conditions with a lack of nursing racial concordance to Hispanic and African- American patients.

Figure 1:

### UC San Diego Health does not have adequate representation of Hispanic and Black nurses to meet the needs of our patient population.



Diversity among caregivers is needed to achieve equity and stellar outcomes for all patients.



**Gerard Phillips DNP, MBA, RN** is the Senior Nursing Director for UCSDH Hillcrest Inpatient Medicine and Surgical Services. Gerard has over 20 years of experience in nursing and healthcare leadership including oversight of nursing, patient flow/capacity management, case management, social work, transfer center, central staffing, lift team, guest relations, interpreter services, transitional telephonic nursing, and transitions of care. He received his Doctor of Nursing Practice in Health Systems and Organizational Leadership from Oregon Health & Science University; Master's in Business Administration from University of Louisiana at Lafayette; and Bachelor of Science in Nursing from Louisiana State University - New Orleans.



**Cabiria (Bea) Lizarraga, MSN, RN-BC, NE-BC**, nurse manager at UCSDH since 2016. Passionate about service to the community, patient outcomes, and mentoring of staff members. She has been a nurse since 1989 and spent almost half of those years as a nurse leader working in emergency room, outpatient and inpatient units. She is currently a nurse manager for a 45-bed medical surgical/ telemetry unit at UCSDH Hillcrest.

**Genesis R. Bojorquez PhD, RN, NE-BC, PCCN** is a PhD prepared nurse and Dean's Research Scholar from the University of San Diego Hahn School of Nursing. She received her bachelor's degree, magna cum laude, from San Diego State University School of Nursing, where she was awarded a Centers for Disease Control fellowship and named a CDC Undergraduate Public Health Scholar. As part of her PhD curriculum, she received her master's degree in nursing with an emphasis in executive nurse leadership. Her clinical experience spans multiple health care settings, including acute care facilities, rehabilitation centers, home health agencies, and school-based clinics. In addition to her practice roles in these diverse settings, she is involved in local community health initiatives.



**Gwendolyn McPherson MPA, MSN, RN, CNS** is the Assistant Nurse Manager for 10 ICUs, one of UC San Diego Health Hillcrest Inpatient Medicine and Surgical Services divisions. Gwen has over 35 years in healthcare, including 20 years as a respiratory therapist and 16 years in nursing, with the past five in nursing leadership. She currently assists with the management of 100 employees, including telemetry technicians. Gwen organized and helped to create virtual education for staff. She is a graduate of the Frontline Leadership Impact. She and her teammates developed the DREAM extern program at UCSDH, which created a pathway for associate degree nurses to join a magnet system. Gwendolyn has a master's in public administration from San Diego State University and a master's with a clinical nurse specialist from Point Loma Nazarene University.

Dr. Gerard Phillips, Senior Director of Nursing at Hillcrest Inpatient Medicine Services (HIMS) challenged his leadership team to review the ASPIRE program at Cleveland Clinic and consider creating a similar pipeline program. Bea Lizarraga, Gwendolyn McPherson, and Dr. Genesis Bojorquez took up the gauntlet and developed a program affording Associate Degree in Nursing (ADN) nurses and students with diverse backgrounds an opportunity to become nurses at UCSDH. After six months working and partnering with local community colleges and universities, the Diversity Retention Equity Aspire Mentor (DREAM) curriculum was developed to address socioeconomic and other barriers faced by students from under-represented groups. ADN programs

have historically acted as a vital pathway for underrepresented groups to enter nursing (National Educations Progression in Nursing Collaborative 2020; Starr, 2010). Candidates are selected after considering students' grade point average, academics, and a written submission that elicits more subjective details about themselves, their ambitions, passions, and experiences. DREAM externs are provided a didactic curriculum, including a clinical nursing preceptorship and classroom instruction of relationship-based care, research, evidence-based practice, and simulation healthcare. Externs are paired with UCSDH nurse mentors, who walk alongside and support them throughout the DREAM experience and likely beyond. These mentors provide guidance, advise, and can be a safe sounding board when needed. They are frontline nurses and nurse leader volunteers currently working throughout UCSDH who have been trained. They are provided with a template to assist mentees in to engage regularly as well as partnering with them in setting and progressing toward their goals.

The first DREAM Program cohort July 2021 was comprised of ten student nurses from Southwestern Community College in the third semester of their ADN program place on HIMS Med/ Surg, PCU, and ICU units in Hillcrest. All ten of these DREAM externs have since enrolled in BSN bridge programs with the majority expected to graduate in 2023. All ten have also successfully passed their NCLEX exam, and nine are working as registered nurses at UCSDH. Currently, DREAM is in its second cohort of eleven nurse externs. Extern opportunities have expanded from Hillcrest to additional units and subspecialties across the organization including Jacob's Medical Center, Trauma, and Surgical Intensive Care.

UC San Diego Health was recently awarded a 2.2 million dollar 5-year grant (<https://indiaeducationdiary.in/uc-san-diego-new-student-program-to-help-address-diversity-gap-in-health-care-industry/>) from the Department of Health Care Access and Information through the state of California to develop health professional pathways for

## Inclusion criteria for the DREAM extern program are:

### Externs must also meet 2 of the following three criteria:

- U.S. Citizen, non-citizen national, or legal permanent resident
- Underrepresented population in Nursing
- Demonstrate financial need.
- Enrolled in the 3rd semester of Nursing School during the 2022/2023 academic year
- Cumulative GPA of 3.0 or better on a 4.0 scale (as demonstrated by an official transcript)\
- Ability to attend all didactic classroom sessions
- First generation in their family to graduate from an accredited college or university
- Education/Preparation: GPA of 3.0 or higher in associate nursing degree program, and / or enrollment in BSN bridge program. Nurse Aide certification by the state of California. BART or BLS/CPR certification. Demonstrates commitment to lifelong learning.
- Communication in writing is clear, confident and concise. Written communication (as evidenced by questionnaire, cover letter, resume) has minimal grammar/punctuation errors. Resume is presented professionally (no changes in font, poor formatting) and lacks repetitive or unnecessary information and includes relevant experience for a clinical nurse role.
- Clinical Exposure: minimum completion of 3rd semester in nursing program. Experience and exposure in one or more clinical specialty areas, to include diagnoses, treatments, standards of practice and patient/family educational consulting and resources.
- Professional Activities: Applicant participates in activities aligned with nursing professional development and associated with enhancing professional practice

our community. This grant will allow UCSDH to expand the DREAM program to include students from high school up through and including graduate students. The DREAM externship program partners with local high schools, community colleges, state universities, and community faith-based and social organizations to increase exposure and recruitment of underrepresented groups to all the allied health professions. Program will also liaison with existing wrap around service providers to allocate assistance for food and housing insecurities or other barriers to success are addressed.

As acknowledgement that diversity in nursing leads to improved outcomes grows, by optimizing diversity of the workforce through the DREAM program, UCSDH is uniquely positioned in San Diego to address healthcare disparities and

workforce issues, while meeting the demands of our patient population. The DREAM program provides a solid structure for UC San Diego Health to actively increase opportunities for underrepresented nursing students, further showcasing commitment to developing diverse and expertly trained nurses in our region. UCSDH is committed to breaking down barriers, improving healthcare equity, and creating a more diverse nursing workforce.

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