

# UConn

## SCHOOL OF NURSING

### NEWS RELEASE

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### **UConn School of Nursing Receives Prestigious *Future of Nursing Scholars* Grant to Prepare PhD Nurses**

***Multi-funder initiative aims to help reach Institute of Medicine goal to build the next generation of PhD prepared nursing leaders.***

STORRS, CT – UConn School of Nursing is one of only 32 schools of nursing nationwide to receive a grant to increase the number of nurses holding PhDs. The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation's [\*Future of Nursing Scholars\*](#) program will provide financial support, mentoring, and leadership development to nurses who commit to earn their PhDs in three years. UConn will select two nursing students to receive this prestigious scholarship.

Regina Cusson, dean of UConn's School of Nursing said, "This is a milestone award for our school and represents a large step forward. UConn SON joins other top schools of nursing, such as Duke, UPenn, Johns Hopkins and U of MD as we are funded in this 3rd cohort. We have applied for RWJF funding many times over the years and this success is emblematic of external recognition of our rising profile. I am very proud of the hard work of Dr. Jacqueline McGrath is bringing this grant to fruition. Her grantsmanship knowledge and recognition of the importance of utilizing external consultants to enhance success is a testament to her leadership and national profile. The school now has multiple options for support of doctoral study from both internal and external funders, including Graduate School scholar awards, the Jonas Foundation and now RWJF."

The *Future of Nursing Scholars* program is a multi-funder initiative. In addition to RWJF, Johnson & Johnson, Inc., Independence Blue Cross Foundation, Northwell Health (formerly North Shore Long Island Jewish Health System), Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center, Sharp HealthCare, Rush University Medical Center, and a Michigan funders collaborative\* are supporting the *Future of Nursing Scholars* grants to schools of nursing this year.

UConn School of Nursing will select a scholar/scholars in March and she/he/those students will begin the *Future of Nursing Scholars* program this summer and her/his/their PhD studies this fall.

“It is exciting for our PhD students to be in the 3<sup>rd</sup> cohort of the RWJ Scholars Program; the opportunities provided have the potential to exponentially propel their careers forward as nurse scientists,” said Associate Dean of research Dr. Jacqueline McGrath.

In its landmark nursing [report](#), the Institute of Medicine recommended that the country double the number of nurses with doctorates; doing so will prepare and enable nurses to lead change to advance health, promote nurse-led science and discovery, and put more educators in place to prepare the next generation of nurses. The *Future of Nursing Scholars* program is intended to help address that recommendation.

“Since the release of the IOM report, enrollment in doctorate of nursing practice programs has increased in an incredible 160% from 2010 to 2014. However, the increase of PhD enrollment has only been 14.6%. At RWJF, we are striving to grow the number of nurses with PhDs who will be prepared to assume leadership positions across all levels,” said Susan Hassmiller, PhD, RN, FAAN, co-director of the program and RWJF’s senior adviser for nursing.

The number of nurses enrolled in PhD programs is not the only issue addressed by this program. The average age at which nurses get their PhDs in the United States is 46—13 years older than PhD earners in other fields. This program will provide an incentive for nurses to start PhD programs earlier, so that they can have long leadership careers after earning their PhDs.

“The *Future of Nursing Scholars* represent a group of students who are already making considerable contributions to the field,” said Julie Fairman, PhD, RN, FAAN, *Future of Nursing Scholars* program co-director. “These nurses are publishing their research and meeting with national leaders, while working at an advanced pace so that they can complete their PhD education in only three years.” Fairman is also the Nightingale professor of nursing and the chair of the Department of Biobehavioral Health Sciences at the University of Pennsylvania School of Nursing.

\* Michigan funders collaborative includes: Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan Foundation, Metro Health Foundation, Ethel and James Flinn Foundation, DMC Foundation, and the Community Foundation for Southeast Michigan.

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**About UConn’s [School of Nursing](#)** has a timeless commitment to wellness and provides the exceptional education needed to succeed and lead in the rapidly evolving healthcare professions. The school is fully approved, accredited and committed to quality research and public service. Its faculty members

advance knowledge through excellence in scholarship and research into the healthcare needs of the world's diverse population. It seeks to earn the support of Connecticut taxpayers by dispatching a steady stream of competent, confident, compassionate nursing professionals – clinicians and scholars alike – into a world that desperately needs them. For more information, visit [www.nursing.uconn.edu](http://www.nursing.uconn.edu).