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Heather O'Bier, Rachel McClanahan, Christine L. Latham, Sue Goo, Valerie Valles and Mary Ann Kelly.

Becoming School Nurses

First Class in School Nursing Concentration Completing Program

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The first students in Cal State Fullerton's master of science in nursing, school nursing concentration, are preparing to graduate.

Susan Goo of San Juan Capistrano, Rachel McClanahan of Ventura and Heather O'Bier of Victorville will complete coursework this month and attend the May 23 commencement ceremony. Valerie Valles of Aliso Viejo will complete coursework in December.

The school nursing concentration is an online distance program that incorporates coursework from the departments of nursing, human communication, special education, secondary education, health science and counseling. The program includes all of the coursework needed for a school nurse credential - a requirement for ongoing school nursing employment in California - and the Special Teaching Authorization in Health (STAH).

STAH-certified school nurses are authorized to teach health education in school classrooms. Completing state requirements for the school nurse credential and authorization to teach health to children as part of a master's degree education set Cal State Fullerton students apart from other programs that only focus on the credential component, said Christine L. Latham, professor of nursing and principal investigator of a \$685,000 grant that helped initiate the program.

Program development was funded by the Prop 10 Commission (Children and Families Commission in Orange County). Funding was spread over three years, which allowed one year of planning and two years

of initial operations, Latham said.

The school nurse concentration was added to the MSN program in 2005. The school nurse credential and STAH coursework were approved by the State of California Teacher Credentialing Commission that year after a two-volume self-study report was approved. The first class was admitted in fall 2005.

Mary Ann Kelly, coordinator of the school nurse concentration, worked with Latham in designing and implementing the program.

Today, there are 80 students enrolled. The concentration has received statewide and national recognition for its innovative approaches, and students and school nurse faculty have been honored.

Latham, former web technician Lewis Hill and the Nursing Department received the "Halo Award" from the Orange County School Nurse Organization for supporting school nurses in Orange County through website outreach. Faculty and student work frequently is selected for presentations at the annual National Association of School Nurse Conferences. Goo and McClanahan will be presenting their master's project work at the June 28 NASN Conference in Boston.

Photos are available online at www.fullerton.edu/newsphotos.

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