Celebrating 30 years!
Scholars.
Research.
Latest News.

Howell Newsletter
Q4 - November 2025

Howell Scholar Highlights

Meet Sandy Jellen – one of the 2025 Howell-USD Nursing Scholars! Ms. Jellen is a doctoral student at USD's Hahn School of Nursing and Health Science, working with mentor Dr. Cynthia Connelly. Sandy's research project is aimed at evaluating the effectiveness of screening tools for the identification of sexual trauma.

Sandy notes, "…when women disclose their sexual trauma history, it allows for an opportunity to offer trauma-informed care and minimize the emotional stressors caused by invasive exams. A trained nurse can provide individualized, informed care such as respecting boundaries, therapeutic communication, and empowering patients to have an active part in their care." She hopes the results of her research will change routine nursing assessments, particularly when performing sensitive gynecological exams.

Ms. Jellen, an oncology nurse with 25 years' experience, also has a Behavioral Science degree and experience working with adolescent sex crime victims. She explains, "Sexual

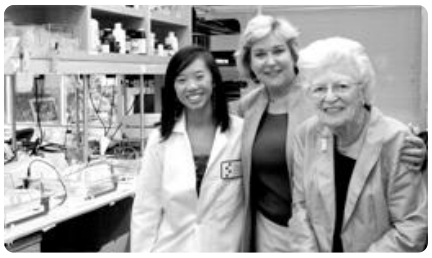
We also want to celebrate 2025 Howell-USD Nursing Scholar Kristina Lopez, a doctoral student completing her work with mentor, Dr. Cynthia Connelly.

In her research proposal, Ms. Lopez explained that the increased use of technologies, like robotics and minimally invasive surgery (MIS), in gynecologic surgery can prevent large open incisions, allows for expedited recovery, and reduces the number of patients requiring an overnight stay. However, not all patients recover from anesthesia at the same rate, due to individual circumstances, leading to hospitalization instead of a same-day discharge. Kristina's project will explore the relationship between these individual attributes, as well as the anesthetic procedures used, and identify predictors associated with same-day discharges.

The research project is relevant to Ms. Lopez' current clinical area of practice, perianesthesia nursing. Kristina states, "The results will be shared with anesthesiologists currently practicing at

trauma is a difficult topic for many people, but an important one. Academically, this research has deepened my understanding of how psychological vulnerability intersects with medical care."

the study site to create a standardized anesthesia protocol for robotic gynecologic surgery patients to increase the likelihood of successful same-day discharge."



Help us continue to fund Women's Health Research Scholarships!

With shifts in federal funding for science and women's health, your continued support is more vital than ever. Your contributions directly impact those students whose research holds the potential to transform lives.

Access to cutting-edge research is not just a scientific imperative—it's a cornerstone of long-term health and well-being for women. As we close out our 30th Anniversary year, please consider making a gift to support women's health research.

Click here to Donate Today!

Women's Health Research News

Latest news:

- Conventional wisdom says that women have higher incidence of Alzheimer disease simply because they live longer. However, researchers are starting to tease out a more nuanced view. Luckily, *JAMA* (published by the American Medical Association) occasionally shares free articles about breaking medical news. If you're interested in the latest research on Alzheimer disease in women, we suggest **this JAMA article** published in September 2025. While you're there, you can sign up for the new (also free) JAMA+ Women's Health newsletter.

- In September **Melinda French Gates announced** a $100 million initiative for

2025 Howell Scholarships Recap

This year, **the Howell Foundation awarded $54,000 to fund 18 awards to Howell Scholars conducting women's health research.**

- $26,000 to UCSD Scholars
- $21,000 to CSUBIOTECH Scholars
- $7,000 to USD Nursing Scholars

To date, **the Foundation has awarded over $965,000 women's health research scholarships and funded 427 students.**

It is a testament to our 30 years of collaboration with UCSD, USD, SDSU and CSUBIOTECH that the Howell Foundation continues to fund the best

women's health research. The philanthropic goal is to "focus on areas of women's health with the highest rates of mortality, including autoimmune disease, mental health and cardiovascular health." Her investment, in partnership with other nonprofits, gives women's health research a strategic boost in the face of federal funding cuts and budget uncertainty. The Howell Foundation continues to monitor this situation since the vast majority of our Research Scholars work in federally-funded laboratories and clinics.

and brightest!

Our focus remains clear: to address the critical gaps in women's health research by supporting promising undergraduate and graduate students. These early-career researchers are the lifeblood of innovation. By funding their work, we're investing in the future—cultivating a pipeline of novel ideas and empowering careers that will shape the next generation of breakthroughs.

To learn more about the important women's health research projects being funded visit: **Howell Scholars**.

Check out event photos on our Community Education page!

Recent Community Education Events

Health Lecture Series

The Foundation recently held two community events:

September 26 - Health Lecture Luncheon: *"Integrative Lifestyle Medicine – Nourish to Flourish"* with guest speaker Dr. Melanie Fiorella - Clinical Professor, UCSD Department of Family Medicine and Public Health and Director, Centers for Integrative Medicine and Education, UCSD. Dr. Fiorella's talk centered on the relationship of the gut microbiome and hormone, immune, brain, and bone health, specifically centered on women's health and the era of life.

We were joined by our 2025 Howell-USD Nursing Scholars who shared their upcoming women's health research, and heard from Dean Jane Georges on the long-standing collaboration between the Howell Foundation and USD's Hahn School of Nursing and Health Science. Watch and listen to Dr. Fiorella's presentation here: **https://vimeo.com.**

November 7 - 30th Anniversary Donor Recognition Event: The Howell Foundation held a 30th Anniversary event to celebrate our donors and supporters. Guest speaker Dr. Cynthia Stuenkel, Clinical Professor of Medicine, Endocrinology and Metabolism, UCSD presented *"The Evolution of Women's Health Research - Key Milestones, Lessons Learned, and Where the Field is Headed"*. Watch and listen to Dr. Stuenkel's talk here:

https://vimeo.com.

Visit our **EVENTS** page to see information on both upcoming and past events.

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30 Years of Women's Health Research
More than a milestone—it's a legacy!

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