

## **San Francisco State University offers holistic health training and certification**

If you are considering certification in holistic/alternative health care or are a nurse seeking continuing nursing credits, the Institute for Holistic Health Studies (IHHS) at San Francisco State University may be the place for you.

While there are various private agencies that can grant holistic health and complementary and alternative medicine/health care (CAM) training, the only publicly funded school in the US to do so is San Francisco State University. Nurses—all courses for IHHS qualify for continuing nursing credits (provider number 00344). San Francisco State University students can choose to obtain the certificate, earn a holistic health minor or just take a few of the classes.

The seeds for the university's revolutionary institute were sown in 1976, when Dr. George Araki introduced two courses that paved the way—"new approaches for health and self-regulation" and "research seminar in holistic health." Dr. Araki is founding director of the school's Center for Interdisciplinary Science (CIS), a center focused on "exploring new interdisciplinary perspectives in physical and biological sciences." Dr. Erik Peper, present director of IHHS, taught these first two courses, discussing themes such as biofeedback which soon drew the attention of large audiences. Interest quickly grew and led to the all-encompassing holistic program they offer today.

The classes offered are all varied and cover themes beyond what one may think the typical holistic health program would cover. This is because the school wishes not only to train its students in holistic/alternative health, but to "encourage critical thinking, holistic inquiry and multicultural ways of viewing not only health and illness but also reality, self and world." Some of the classes offered are:

- medical anthropology
- our endangered planet
- magic, myths & medicine: a history of medicine
- nutrition for wellness
- death and dying in contemporary society

Even with a precarious economy, specialists in holistic/alternative health are, and will continue to be, in demand. San Francisco State University points out that numerous public surveys have shown increase in demand for this type of health care. Eisenberg et al, 1998 shows over 83 million Americans as having visited alternative health care providers in the year 1997 alone. Numbers keep climbing as years go by: a May 2004 survey by the National Institute of Health shows 36% of American adults as participants in holistic health. The industry promises to be fulfilling and lucrative; what more can you ask for?