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To Prospective Doctoral Applicants:

I am delighted that you have expressed an interest in doctoral studies in the Department of Nutrition at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. As the Associate Chair for Academic Affairs, I would like to provide information that should answer many of your questions and help you navigate through the application and admission process.

If you have not done so already, I recommend that you start by taking a careful look at our website: <http://www.sph.unc.edu/nutr/>. You will find the doctoral handbook, which provides detailed information about the program, admission requirements, the curriculum, and course descriptions. The website also provides information about research areas (divisions) within our Department: Nutritional Biochemistry; Nutrition Epidemiology; and Nutrition Intervention and Policy. If admitted to the program, you will ultimately select one of these divisions as your departmental "home." You will find brief information about individual faculty members and their research interests in the faculty section, as well as more detail on specific research projects in the division-specific sections. Please note that one section of the website provides additional information of interest to minority student applicants. At any time you may contact our registrar, Mrs. Joanne Lee, by phone (919) 966-7212, or email Joanne_Lee@unc.edu.

Our Doctoral Committee, comprised of faculty members from each division, admits doctoral students. At a minimum, doctoral applicants must hold upon matriculation a bachelor's degree from an accredited college or university. Applicants must have completed the following courses: organic chemistry, anatomy/physiology, biochemistry, a social science course, and a course in basic human nutrition. Ordinarily, we do not consider applicants if their combined verbal and quantitative GRE score is below 1000 or if an individual score is lower than the 50% percentile. Good grades, strong letters of recommendations and a well written personal statement detailing research interests, career goals, and previous relevant experience all contribute to a successful application.

All applicants are concerned about funding, and we work hard to assure that all of our doctoral students receive competitive stipends and tuition coverage. Although we recognize that it may be difficult to be certain about your research interests early in the application process, you can help us to identify one or more potential faculty "matches" within your potential area of research.

By communicating with individual faculty members and becoming familiar with their research, you should be able to identify your general research areas of interest and the relevant departmental division. We will then provide the mentoring you need and identify funding to support your education.

It is important to understand that by identifying a division and faculty match at this stage, you are NOT required to remain in this division or work with this faculty member as a dissertation advisor. It is not uncommon for students to change their research interests after attending classes for a year and getting to know more about faculty research. It will be the student's responsibility to seek faculty assistance in making the decision to change divisions and/or faculty advisors while maintaining funding.

Upon receiving this letter, I ask you to review our departmental website (or printed materials from Ms. Joanne Lee) and respond to Ms. Lee by email (Joanne_Lee@unc.edu) with the following information:

1. A sentence or two about your research areas of interest and career goals.
2. The division(s) (Nutritional Biochemistry, Nutrition Epidemiology, or Nutrition Intervention and Policy) that you think best represents your areas of interest.
3. Faculty members whose research is of interest to you.
4. Your GRE scores, or plans to take the exam, and your grade point average (formal transcripts will be required for you application, but this will help us start the process).
5. Any of the required courses that you have not yet completed.
6. Your email and telephone contact information including best times to call.

In return, Ms. Lee will put you in touch with the relevant Division Director(s) who will help you with the application process.

At this point, you will be invited to contact any of the faculty members you have listed, and they will likely be contacting you as well. The Division Directors may suggest additional faculty contacts based on what they know about potential research interest matches.

All interested applicants must submit a written application. We will invite strong applicants to visit Chapel Hill and will cover at least a portion of your expenses. Division Directors will work with you on these travel arrangements. We are well aware that that other universities may be working to recruit you and that your final decision may be difficult. Please keep us informed of offers you may receive and deadlines that you face so that we can do our best to be competitive!

Sincerely,

Melinda Beck, Ph.D.
Professor of Nutrition
Associate Chair for Academic Affairs