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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 information about the program, admission requirements, the curriculum, and course descriptions. The website also provides information about research areas within our Department. 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. Please note that we are in the process of changing the structure of the department. While we will no longer have formal divisions within the department, we continue with very strong programs of research and training across the spectrum of nutrition science, including biochemistry and metabolism, clinical studies, epidemiology, interventions, and policy.

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 across the disciplines represented in our department, 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, and a course in basic human nutrition. Ordinarily, we do not consider applicants if their combined verbal and quantitative GRE score is lower than the 50th 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. We will then provide the mentoring you need and identify funding to support your education.

It is important to understand that by identifying a potential faculty match at this stage, you are NOT required to 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 faculty advisors while maintaining funding.

Upon receiving this letter, I ask you to review our departmental website and respond to Mrs. 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. Faculty members whose research is of interest to you.
3. Your GRE scores, or plans to take the exam, and your grade point average (formal transcripts will be required for your application, but this will help us start the process).
4. Any of the required courses that you have not yet completed.
5. Your email and telephone contact information including best times to call.

We make admissions decisions relatively early, with merit award nominations in November. For this reason, it is very important that you email Mrs. Lee as per above in advance of November 1st and preferably in mid-October to express interest in our program. This is only an email expression of interest, it is not a full application. As noted in our PhD Handbook, December 1, 2016 is the recommended date to formally apply for admission. However, our admissions committee begins reviewing prospective candidates on November 1st, which is the application date for students to be considered and eligible for merit awards. We admit students in waves, so some students not selected for merit awards may be given consideration later in the admission process.

Once you have expressed interest in our program as per above, you will be invited to contact any of the faculty members you have listed, and they may be contacting you as well. We 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 the strongest applicants to visit Chapel Hill as part of a recruiting event and will cover at least a portion of your expenses. We will work with you on these travel arrangements. We are well aware 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 A. Beck, Ph.D.
Professor of Nutrition
Associate Chair for Academic Affairs