Dear Friends of Auburn University School of Nursing:

For nearly four decades, Auburn University's School of Nursing has offered exceptional programs designed to educate quality nurses to support the state’s healthcare needs. As dean, I am committed to ensuring we maintain the steadfast quality of these programs and that we accommodate Auburn students who wish to pursue a career in nursing. Despite a national nursing shortage in recent years, the School continues to experience significant demand for additional program offerings, faculty, and space.

To accommodate this demand, the School successfully doubled its enrollment by establishing two admissions processes per year, in the fall and spring semesters. While this approach allowed for more students to be admitted to our program, it created an unintended consequence for those students admitted in the spring. These students were only able to complete the medical surgical course required for the major during the summer. The disadvantage to completing one of the most challenging and fundamental courses in the summer lies in the shortened duration of 10 weeks as opposed to 15 weeks in the fall and spring. A careful review of data combined with feedback from students indicates that completion of this course in the summer places our students at a significant disadvantage with regard to readiness, as well as preparation for standardized specialty exams and the national licensing exam. In 2016, the School piloted an extended summer semester calendar in an attempt to resolve the issue; however, that solution created additional problems for students and faculty.

Following a careful review of our processes, and with exhaustive input from faculty and students, the School has amended our admission cycle for the 2018-19 academic year. Admission to the program will now occur in the summer and fall semesters. This change allows our students to complete the medical surgical course in the fall or spring semesters, which is vital to the success of our student nurses and the patients they serve. Additionally, the change provides students with a summer to pursue professional opportunities including internships, study abroad experiences, and clinically-related work.

This revised admission cycle does not affect the total number of students enrolled in the nursing program. During the initial year the school will continue to admit 200 students per year; however, we will admit 50 students in Fall 2018, 50 students in Spring 2019, and 100 students in Summer 2019. Thereafter, admissions will be 100 students each summer and 100 students each fall. Staggering those students admitted in the fall and spring is necessary due to these two cohorts taking the same courses in their third semester thus requiring the same clinical experiences at once. Designing the change the way we have is necessary to ensure all students get the clinical placements they need. We are admitting students in the fall semester, so for many, this change will have no impact at all on their admission date. Similarly, those students who have not completed their prerequisite courses and were anticipating Spring 2019 admission may also see no impact. If students are not admitted for Fall 2018 or Spring 2019 semester, we plan to provide an opportunity for them to take some early nursing courses before the next round of admissions allowing them to continue progressing toward their nursing degree.
We understand that change can be disruptive and unsettling; however, the decision was guided by our enduring goals of offering Auburn students the best possible nursing education and preparing them to enter the workforce ready to provide safe and effective care. Academic Advisors within the school are conducting application information sessions and hosting individual appointments for students who are planning to apply for 2018-2019 admission. We are available to personally answer questions and will continue to provide support for students and families throughout this process.

Gregg Newschwaner
Barbara S. Witt Professor and Dean