Dear Prospective Student:

Thank you for your interest in the new Otterbein University/Grant Medical Center Nurse Anesthesia program. This letter will provide you with information on the status of the program and admission and application requirements.

On May 20, the nurse anesthesia program received initial accreditation from the Council on Accreditation of Nurse Anesthesia Educational Programs (222 South Prospect, Park Ridge, IL 60068; 847-692-7050). The Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association also approved this new graduate nursing track.

**Applications are currently being accepted for the class beginning in January 2012.** Twenty students will be accepted for this class. The program anticipates receiving many more applications than can be accepted. Approximately 2-3 applicants will be invited to interview for each position. Selected applicants will be interviewed in late March 2011. **The deadline for applications is January 30th, 2011**. Incomplete applications will not be reviewed.

The nurse anesthesia program is a 28-month, seven-semester course of study leading to a Master of Science in Nursing degree. The program is front-loaded with two semesters of didactic instruction to prepare students for entry into clinical practice. Classroom and clinical experiences are integrated throughout the remaining five semesters. Students will have the opportunity to administer a variety of anesthetic techniques for individuals of all ages undergoing all types of surgical and diagnostic procedures. Graduates of the program will be eligible to sit for the National Certification Examination given by the Council on Certification of Nurse Anesthetists.

Nurse anesthesia is a challenging and demanding profession. The program is tasked with developing independent practitioners in a relatively short 28-month period. Therefore, it is important that applicants have a good understanding of the program’s expectations before applying.

To assist you in understanding the program and its requirements, some of the major expectations are outlined below:

- The program is seven semesters of continuous, full-time study. A part-time program is not available.
- Students admitted to cohort beginning in January 2012 may take several nursing core courses in the summer and fall semesters before the actual program begins. According to current students, taking these courses before entering full-time into the nurse anesthesia program substantially decreases student stress.
After the first two semesters, the program does not follow the academic calendar. This means that there are no formal breaks for the last 5 semesters. Instead, students are allocated 20 days for vacation, sick time, job interviews, etc. These days must be scheduled in advance. Students are responsible for any assignments missed when taking time off.

The didactic program requires successful completion of all coursework, portfolio, and capstone project. Students must maintain an overall 3.0 grade point average and cannot achieve a grade lower than a B in any nurse anesthesia course.

The clinical program will include labs and observational experiences during the first two semesters. Beginning in the third semester, students will be in clinical 3 days a week, gradually progressing to 4 and 5 days a week in later semesters.

Didactic and clinical schedules are formulated to meet the objectives of the program and students’ learning needs, not personal agendas or schedules.

Clinical days will extend beyond normal day-time work hours. Students are expected to arrive in sufficient time to prepare for the day’s assigned cases and stay until dismissed by their preceptor.

Clinical assignments may occur any day of the week including weekends and holidays. Students will have a call experience that will include various shifts during “off” hours (11 am – 7 pm, 3-11 pm, 7 pm – 7 am, etc.)

Clinical assignments depend upon the surgical schedule. Assignments are subject to change and students are expected to be adaptable.

Significant time must be devoted to reading, studying, and preparing for clinical and classroom assignments. This includes time above and beyond that spent in the classroom or clinical area. The average weekly time commitment may approach 60 hours a week.

Due to the extensive time commitment, it is very difficult, if not impossible to work, even on a part-time basis during the program. Working is strongly discouraged.

Applicants are encouraged to prepare themselves and their families for the emotional and financial rigors of the program. Significant stressors include loss of income, free time, and a return to the student role. Self esteem may suffer as students leave positions as expert practitioners and leaders to become learners. Former study habits may prove inadequate for the demands of the anesthesia curriculum.
I hope that after reading this letter you are still interested in applying to the proposed Otterbein University/Grant Medical Center Nurse Anesthesia Program. The expectations that I’ve outlined may sound daunting, but success in a nurse anesthesia program requires fortitude, motivation, and determination. Just as planning a safe anesthetic means anticipating adverse events that may occur, planning for your future career as a nurse anesthetist requires that you “be prepared.”

I am thrilled that Otterbein and Grant are collaborating to offer this high quality program in central Ohio. I believe that we have developed an excellent clinical and didactic curriculum that will prepare graduates for the full range of nurse anesthesia practice. If you have additional questions, you may contact me via e-mail: eseibert@Otterbein.edu.

Sincerely,

Elizabeth Seibert, PhD, CRNA
Program Director