Dear Students, Faculty and Staff,

As the new school year begins, I have been reflecting and envisioning what course the School of Nursing will chart over the next year. Last year was a time of profound joy and loss, from celebrating the School’s 60th Anniversary to the pain of losing treasured family, friends, and belongings. The outpouring of support and resolve by our students and nursing colleagues was a testament to the pivotal role nurses play in building communities, lives, and the health care system. As we rebuild together, watch the construction project come together in our School in an effort to improve our learning environment for students, faculty, and staff.

With change comes opportunity and the opportunities are vast for you as a member of the nursing profession. The Institute of Medicine (IOM) released a seminal report last October outlining how nursing was at the front lines of health care reform and made key recommendations for our profession. These recommendations centered in large part around nursing education. Education is a personal journey centered on faculty individually guiding, developing, and challenging student’s to achieve their goals and aspirations. Not only is nursing the largest health care workforce, it is a personal and vital profession. This personal and professional touch begins with education as faculty impact students and students in turn impact patients, families, and communities locally and globally. As I think about the last year, I think about the lasting impact our students, faculty and staff have made and eagerly anticipate what those will be over the next year.

As you begin to think about the up-coming year, I challenge you to think about how you can be a trailblazer. A trailblazer is an innovative leader in a field, a pioneer, someone that can find or make a path through unexplored territory. Over the next year, whether you are a student, professor or staff member, I challenge you to blaze a trail to reach and create something better for our School of Nursing and our communities. As we envision the future of the UAB School of Nursing and nursing profession, I celebrate and call for the continued leadership of our students, faculty, and staff. Your leadership continues to be a hallmark and blazes trails here at UAB and around the world. From disasters to diapers, the student body continues to bring awareness and pioneer new outreach strategies. From mentoring to scholarship, faculty continue to be intellectual trailblazers and advance nursing knowledge. From student support to networking, staff continue to sustain the ongoing work of the School. Together we are a mighty and powerful team of trailblazers ready to lead and partner to improve health care in the 21st century.

In closing, what type of trailblazer are you going to be over the next year?

Blazing the trail,

Doreen C. Harper, PhD, RN, FAAN
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