

## **BUFFETT EARLY CHILDHOOD INSTITUTE GRADUATE SCHOLARS OVERVIEW**

### **Summary**

The Buffett Early Childhood Institute announces the launch of a new fellowship program for advanced doctoral students conducting research concerning the education, development, and well-being of young children. The program provides financial support and mentoring for doctoral students admitted to candidacy within the University of Nebraska system. Up to four students each year will receive up to \$25,000 annually to explore early childhood issues for a maximum of two years. The overriding goal of the program is to increase the diversity and skills of young scholars conducting research about children birth through age 8 and their families, with particular attention to children placed at risk as a consequence of poverty and social and environmental circumstances.

The Buffett Early Childhood Institute Graduate Scholars program grew out of the work of the Buffett Institute's four-campus mission focused on applied research, training/professional development, outreach, and policy concerning young children placed at risk. Just as the Institute is cross-disciplinary and cross-campus, the fellowship program is intended to reach across traditional higher education boundaries to include all those who may have an impact on the lives of young children. The Buffett Institute wants to support the best research and practice from such diverse fields as health, education, social work, music, art, and others. Multidisciplinary research and practice—particularly from disciplines not typically associated with the field of early childhood—and new methodologies are encouraged. These projects will further the mission of the Institute while supporting the best scholars and research programs across campuses.

Letters of intent are due **March 15, 2016**, and full applications are due by **April 15, 2016**. Announcement of the inaugural award winners will be made by the end of June 2016. A webinar to answer questions about the application process will be held on **February 22, 2016**.

### **Program Goals**

The goals of the Buffett Institute Graduate Scholars program are to:

- Support advanced doctoral students in the dissertation phase in a variety of fields across the NU system.
- Foster the growth of diverse, exceptional graduate students by providing mentoring by experts within the NU system and creating opportunities for graduate students within the program to communicate, network, and collaborate with one another.
- Encourage multidisciplinary research and practice—particularly from disciplines not typically associated with early childhood research—as well as the application of new methodologies and

unique multidisciplinary components.

- Promote an early childhood research agenda across disciplines and campuses by engaging students and faculty in in-depth explorations of issues within the field.
- Increase the quantity and quality of research projects that are consistent with the mission and goals of the Buffett Institute, particularly in relation to the Institute's signature programs (Achievement Gap Challenge and Early Childhood Workforce Development).

#### **Award Information**

- The Buffett Institute plans to fund 2 – 4 awards each year.
- Applicants may propose either a 12-month or a 24-month project. The 24-month award is intended for high-quality projects requiring extensive data collection or complex methodology.

#### **Eligibility Criteria**

- Applicants must be full-time, doctoral-level graduate students who have been admitted to candidacy within a department on one of the NU campuses.
- Faculty mentors are expected to be actively involved with the student's research and related Buffett Institute activities. They must be employed full-time at one of the NU campuses.

#### **Project Requirements**

- An original research project consistent with the mission and goals of the Buffett Early Childhood Institute.
- During each year of the award, the student and faculty mentor must commit to attend two meetings sponsored by the Buffett Institute on one of the NU campuses. These meetings will include NU faculty and national guests and will be designed to advance and expand the research and practice of all those involved.

#### **Selection Process**

Applications will be reviewed by a committee of cross-campus, multidisciplinary NU faculty, as well as by Buffett Institute senior staff. The criteria and application process are detailed in a separate RFP. Bonus points will be awarded for applications that represent fields not typically associated with early childhood, bring methodology from other fields and apply them to early childhood, or demonstrate a clear multidisciplinary approach.

Questions about this program should be directed to Machaela Cavanaugh at [mcavanaugh@nebraska.edu](mailto:mcavanaugh@nebraska.edu) or at 402 554-5924. For more information about the Buffett Early Childhood Institute, as well as its signature programs, visit <http://buffettinstitute.nebraska.edu>.