

BUFFETT EARLY CHILDHOOD INSTITUTE GRADUATE SCHOLARS OVERVIEW

Summary

The Buffett Early Childhood Institute at the University of Nebraska offers 1- or 2-year fellowships worth up to \$25,000 annually for advanced doctoral students within the university system who are conducting research concerning the education, development, and well-being of young children. The program, which was launched last year, is the first financial support program for doctoral students who have reached Ph.D. candidacy at the University of Nebraska that focuses on young children and their development. A maximum of four students each year will be awarded fellowships. The overriding goal of the program is to increase the diversity and skills of young scholars conducting research about children from 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 grows 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 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 are intended to further the mission of the Institute while supporting the best scholars and research programs across campuses.

Full applications are due by Monday, April 17, 2017. Announcement of the award winners will be made by the end of June 2017. Selection will be made by a cross-campus committee of senior faculty and senior staff of the Buffett Institute.

Program Goals

The goals of the Buffett 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 innovative 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 two to four 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.
- During each year of the award, the student must present a Year 1 Project Report and/or Final Report to the Buffett Early Childhood Institute and additional guests at an event in June hosted by the Institute.

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 the RFP. Bonus points will be awarded for applications that (1) represent fields not typically associated with early childhood, (2) utilize innovative methodology, or (3) demonstrate a clear multidisciplinary approach.

About the Buffett Early Childhood Institute

The Buffett Early Childhood Institute at the University of Nebraska is an innovative research, practice, policy, and outreach institute dedicated to promoting the development and learning of children from birth through age 8. Visit buffettinstitute.nebraska.edu for more information.