DIRECTOR OF PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

Position Description

The Buffett Early Childhood Institute at the University of Nebraska is seeking applications from highly qualified candidates for the position of Director of Professional Learning. This individual will fulfill an integrative role at the Institute, working with those who are conceptualizing and leading systemic approaches to reducing achievement and opportunity gaps in early learning and education settings, birth through Grade 3; blending knowledge and experience from the research, program, and early childhood workforce units of the Institute; and disseminating this information to a wide range of audiences. This individual will report to the executive director of the Institute and will work closely with the other Institute directors, including Communications and Marketing.

The goals of the professional learning unit are threefold:

- To collaborate across Institute units and integrate research, program, and workforce initiatives by strengthening the role of implementation science in these units and enhancing cross-disciplinary use of Institute-derived evidence and experience to change practice and build professional capacity.
- To develop, disseminate, and support the implementation of multi-modal methods designed to increase the capacities of schools and community-based programs that reduce and/or eliminate income-and race-based disparities in opportunity and social, cognitive, and academic outcomes among young children. These methods may include train-the-trainer, coaching, and other implementation strategies.
- Working with university, state, and national partners, collaboratively lead initiatives that will increase the knowledge, skills, and well-being of the early childhood workforce and other professionals in Nebraska and beyond. In particular, develop strategic, capacity-building competence in the workforce in areas of teaching, learning, leadership, family partnerships, and community connections.

Buffett Early Childhood Institute Profile

Envisioned as a new model for how public higher education is engaged in the first years of life, the Buffett Early Childhood Institute is a four-campus, university-wide, multidisciplinary research, education, outreach, and policy institute of the University of Nebraska committed to helping transform early childhood development and education in Nebraska and across the nation.

The long-term goal of the Institute is to be a leading center where scholars, practitioners, community members, and policymakers collaborate to advance a unified approach that can improve the lives of young children and families and the systems that support them. Two signature programs characterize the principal activities of the Institute: Closing the Opportunity Gap and Elevating the Early Childhood Workforce.
Applicants should note that the goals of the Institute are university-, state-, and nation-wide, but the location of the Institute administration is in Omaha. This position will work primarily out of the Omaha office.

**Job Responsibilities**

In addition to periodic unique tasks, the following describes major responsibilities:

- Oversee implementation of strategic professional learning initiatives to increase the capacity of Nebraska’s early care and education workforce, including the Professional Development for All component of the Superintendents’ Early Childhood Plan. Methods may include workshops, webinars, communities of practice, training of trainers, coaching, and other innovative formats.

- Contribute to the development and learning of early care and education professionals through in-person, virtual, and hybrid programs that focus on enhancing equity, quality, and continuity in children’s learning and development.

- Engage in systematic piloting, evaluating, and field testing of dissemination and implementation approaches in the metro Omaha area, Nebraska, and nationally, including the development of a birth through Grade 3 instructional toolkit.

- Work with the Program Development unit to develop effective professional learning and capacity-building models in support of equity, quality, and continuity in birth through Grade 3 systems to reduce and/or eliminate opportunity and achievement gaps.

- Work with the Workforce Development unit to gain insights about the professional learning needs and interests of the early childhood workforce to inform the development and implementation of professional learning programs.

- Work with the Research and Evaluation unit to develop and support research-practice partnerships in early care and education aimed at solving problems of practice and generating solutions for improving educational outcomes.

- Work with the Communications and Marketing unit to promote and disseminate the goals, plans, and programs of the Professional Learning unit.

- Enact values of diversity, equity, and inclusion in program and organizational activities and outcomes.

- Identify critical areas for partnerships with faculty and staff on all four University of Nebraska campuses and collaborate with state early childhood partners, engaging them in programmatic and research efforts that enhance the early years.

- Direct the development of potential learning opportunities for Institute staff.

- Manage the operations of the Professional Learning unit.

**Required Qualifications**

- Master’s degree
- Minimum of five years of experience in professional learning and development.
- Minimum of five years in teaching and/or program evaluation.
- Minimum of five years’ experience leading programs and/or systems of service that support children and families in the first eight years of life.
- Demonstrated familiarity with implementation science and/or evidence-based models of early childhood programming and intervention.
- Excellent oral and written communication skills with attention to detail.
- Experience with grant writing, budgeting, and overseeing accounts.
Preferred Qualifications
• MS degree in child development/early childhood education
• Ph.D. in child development/early childhood education strongly preferred
• Experience with PreK–Grade 12 and higher education

How to Apply
Applications are processed through the online job posting at https://careers.nebraska.edu. Follow instructions to complete the Standard Application. Along with your application, attach a cover letter, resume, and contact information for three professional references. Direct questions about the position to: humanresources@nebraska.edu. Direct questions about the online application process to: (402) 472-3701.

The University of Nebraska is an Affirmative Action/Equal Opportunity Employer and participates in E-Verify. All qualified applicants will receive consideration for employment without regard to race, color, religion, sex, age, national origin, disability, gender identity, sexual orientation or protected veteran status.

ADDENDUM FOR DIRECTOR OF PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

Competencies
• Nature/Complexity of Work
  This position requires an individual who works with considerable independence, energy, initiative, strong work ethic, and sound judgment in a complex day-to-day environment. Ability to lead unit operations. Strong attention to detail, accuracy, professional discretion, and sensitivity to confidential information, a record of effective teamwork with others, and time management skills are required. Knowledge of the University of Nebraska’s organizational structure and interrelationships among the campuses and internal and external constituencies is helpful in this position.

• Problem Solving/Decision Making
  Problem solving and appropriate decision making are required in every element of this position. Key duties involve independent judgment regarding analysis of issues and actions required to support day-to-day business transactions. Actions are governed by broad objectives, professional ethics, university procedures and/or business acumen.

• Strategic Input
  This individual is required to be proficient and conscientious when always representing the Buffett Institute and the University. Administrative review is often necessary before information is released by this position, but the responsibility for error-free detail supporting analytical information rests with the employee. Also required is a strong sense of the requirements of a stable organization and its long-term needs with the ability to exercise significant initiative and creativity in developing new value-added relationships with the Institute’s stakeholders. Someone who is mission-driven and is deeply committed to the values of the Institute.
• **Know-How**
  This position demands the ability to be agile, entrepreneurial, operate independently, and thrive in a fast-paced and multi-tasking environment. The candidate should demonstrate exceptional interpersonal skills with a strong orientation toward diplomacy, tact, collaboration, and teamwork; exceptional verbal, writing, editing, and proofreading skills; must be detail-oriented and accurate; must have ability to prioritize effectively and quickly respond to shifting priorities; have the ability to collect, compile, and analyze facts, draw conclusions, and recommend solutions; possess a strong work ethic and willingness to work beyond regular hours, if necessary; and demonstrate a high level of professional discretion and confidentiality. Ability to interpret and prepare information for analysis activities and communicate findings to management is essential. Must follow Board of Regents bylaws and policies and state and federal law and other rules and regulations.

• **Technical Skills**
  This position demands some technology proficiency, with proficiency in using Microsoft Word, Excel, PowerPoint, and Outlook required.

• **Interactions**
  This position will be expected to manage and collaborate with individuals and their projects. Ability to assume authority, advocate new ideas, identify, and address obstacles and the judgment to seek supervision and/or input from others when necessary is expected. This position will help build and strengthen relationships with the University of Nebraska campuses and must have the ability to work as a member of a team, as well as independently, in a complex environment, and with respect for confidential and sensitive information. This position also interacts with many external constituencies. The candidate should be an optimistic, positive, resilient, insightful, and performance-driven decision maker, problem solver, and consensus builder.

• **Supervision**
  This position reports to the executive director. This position supervises the associate director of Professional Learning and co-supervises the office associate.