

# Fred & Pamela Buffett Cancer Center Training Navigator Newsletter

## December 2024 Outreach Newsletter Volume 11

Fred & Pamela Buffett Cancer  
Center National Cancer Institute  
(NCI) Training Navigator  
Program Administrative  
Supplement

Have a question about a  
cancer education or career  
opportunity at UNMC? Email  
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Misty Pocwierz-Gaines, MA  
Lead Training Navigator,  
UNMC



Pallace Messer, MBA  
Assistant Training Navigator,  
UNMC



## Training Navigator Office News

We are excited to report  
Pallace Messer has joined  
the Training Navigator Team  
as an Assistant Training  
Navigator. Pallace only joined  
the team on December 2nd  
and has already established  
herself as integral part of the  
team. If you have not met her  
yet, please stop by the Buffett  
Cancer Center 9th floor to  
say hello.



# Scholar Spotlight: Dr. Brittney Dickey



Dr. Brittney Dickey, PhD, MPH, is an Assistant Professor in the UNMC College of Public Health Department of Epidemiology. She is a full member of the Fred & Pamela Buffett Cancer Center at UNMC and Nebraska Medicine. Previously, she was an applied research scientist in the Department of Cancer Epidemiology of the Moffitt Cancer Center, where she also was a postdoctoral fellow.

She is trained in molecular epidemiology and viral-related cancer etiology. The overarching goal of her research is to better understand the incidence and risk of cancers associated with a viral infection, including those that occur among people with HIV (PHIV). A large focus of her work so far has been to understand HPV infections and particularly oral HPV infections in their progression to cancer. Among PHIV, she has begun to investigate molecular markers of risk for cancer including epigenetic alterations measured via genome-wide methylation.

In her work, she has led or participated in studies which investigated factors associated with oral HPV prevalence, incidence, and persistence among men. She has led studies to evaluate dental factors that impact outcomes and investigate biomarkers to predict early disease in men who have been diagnosed with an HPV-associated oropharyngeal cancer. Specifically, with PHIV, she has pioneered studies that evaluated epigenetic age determined from methylation in the context of cancer risk and outcomes.

Further, she serves as the Protocol Co-Chair on the NIH U54-funded screening trial to optimize cervical cancer screening among women with HIV in Latin America. The experience from her prior work has led her to propose the current study to continue work in this field. She plans to bring knowledge gained to successfully collaborate with the proposed study team, oversee study implementation, and lead analyses, interpretation, and dissemination of findings.

We are excited to see what the future holds for Dr. Brittney Dickey's work and encourage the progression of her career. We are thankful to have her as a part of this program.

# F31 Diversity Predoctoral Fellowship PA-23-271

**Objective:** To promote biomedical workforce diversity by supporting mentored research training leading to a PhD or combined dual doctoral degrees

**Benefits:**

- Mentored research training
- Present and publish research findings as first author
- Strengthen grant skill sets
- Enhance competitiveness for NIH funding
- Serve as Principal Investigator of the F31 as a student

**Support:**

- Provides for up to 5 years (PhD) or 6 years (combined degrees, e.g. MD/PhD)
- Stipend toward living expenses during research and clinical training
- Contribution toward fees
- Institutional allowance to assist with cost of fellowship expenses

**Learn More:**

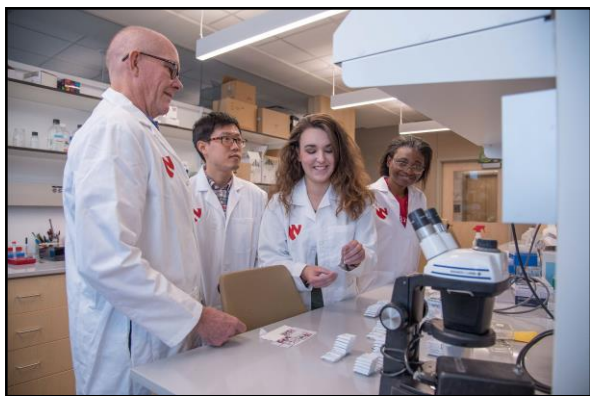
<https://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/pa-files/PA-23-271.html>



**Contact:** Dr. Sangeeta Ghosh  
[sangeeta.ghosh@nih.gov](mailto:sangeeta.ghosh@nih.gov)

Application Deadlines	Earliest Start Dates
April 8, 2025	December 2025
August 8, 2025	April 2026

# UNMC Graduate Studies Fellowships



The Graduate Studies Office has 1-year fellowships available for students. Only full-time PhD students at UNMC who have submitted a Letter of Intent, Project Funding Affirmation, and Abstract on or before February 1st are eligible to apply. The applicant's permanent major advisor and supervisory committee must have been approved in Seguidor prior to the March 1st application deadline.

The format of the Graduate Studies Fellowship

is modeled after the NIH F30/31 application. Students are required to submit a Research Plan that consists of the following documents: Specific Aims (1-page limit), Research Strategy (6-page limit), Literature Cited (no page limit), Respective Contributions (1-page limit), Applications for Concurrent Support (1-page limit), Goals for Fellowship Training and Career (1-page limit), Activities Planned Under this Award (1-page limit), and Responsible Conduct of Research (1-page limit). A list of full eligibility requirements and can be found on the UNMC Graduate Studies website:

<https://www.unmc.edu/gradstudies/admissions/costs-funding/assistantships-fellowships.html>.

All applicants will receive written feedback on their applications. Many students choose to use the application as the basis for an NIH F30/F31 grant proposal, and the written reviews are useful for students who want to strengthen their NIH F30/F31 proposal.

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## Tips and Tricks for Successful NIH F30/31 Applications

Changes are coming soon to the F30 and F31 application formats. Join Dr. Jenny Black on January 14, 2025, at 2:00 pm for "Tips and Tricks for Successful F30/31 Applications". Dr. Black is a professor in the Eppley Institute who was a featured speaker on NIH F Award proposals at the 2024 national Cancer Biology Training Consortium meeting. Dr. Black will be providing insight into the new application formats, as well as providing general information on best practices for writing a solid F Award proposal. To register and to obtain information about the location, contact Pallace Messer ([pmesser@unmc.edu](mailto:pmesser@unmc.edu)).



## Fred and Pamela Buffett Cancer Center



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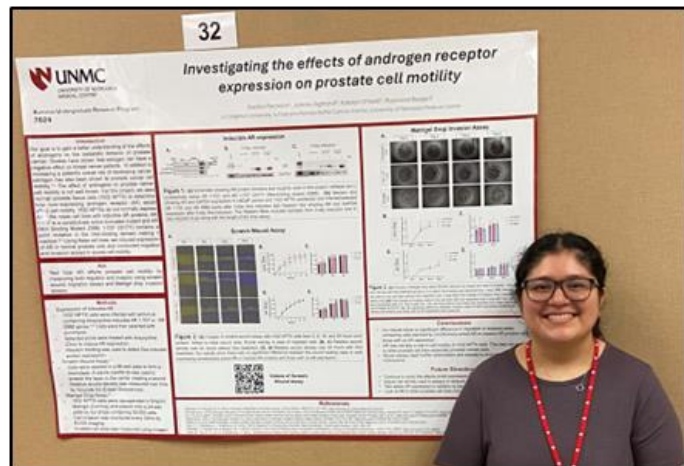
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# Summer Undergraduate Research Program (SURP)



Eppley SURP student with her research poster

The Summer Undergraduate Research Program (SURP) application is now open. The Eppley Institute in partnership with the Fred & Pamela Buffett Cancer Center (FPBCC) hosts five undergraduate students in cancer research laboratories for a 10-week, paid, hands-on research experience. This is a great way for students to gain valuable career exploration and professional development. From NIH grant funds, the FPBCC supports housing, transportation and meal costs for students who meet the NIH definition as underrepresented in science; this includes students from rural areas in addition to other considerations. Visit the [SURP website](#) or email Misty Pocwierz-Gaines, [misty.pocwierz@unmc.edu](mailto:misty.pocwierz@unmc.edu), for more information about the program. The application deadline is February 1.

