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# Project LINC Preparing Scholar Leaders to Study Interventions and Complex Systems

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***UConn invites applicants for Project LINC, an innovative special education doctoral degree program and partnership with BU.***

**Purpose:** Project LINC is an innovative partnership between Boston University's Wheelock College of Education & Human Development and the University of Connecticut's Neag School of Education. Admission to Project LINC will provide doctoral scholars with access to resources and expertise at both universities, preparing them to:

1. Understand interventions in literacy, social and behavioral skills, and transition,
2. Understand the complex educational systems that support students with disabilities, and
3. Conduct rigorous research related to these foci.

## **LINC Scholar Activities:**

- Conduct research in collaboration with leading experts in special education and related fields to design, implement, and publish rigorous studies.
- Participate in LINC Seminars with the cross-site cohort to support scholars in program success.
- Complete advanced coursework to help them design and conduct rigorous research.
- Use online learning to acquire knowledge specific to LINC.
- Complete research internships in LINC-related organizations, including state and local education agencies and local and national organizations that serve students with disabilities.
- Collaborate with exceptional scholars at both institutions and faculty experts from other institutions.
- Attend and present at professional conferences.

## **Project LINC Scholar Benefits**

- Completely paid tuition.
- Monthly stipend to support full-time work in program (up to 4.5 years).
- University health insurance (while enrolled).
- Financial resources for additional travel, internship costs, and other LINC expenses.

Prospective scholars are encouraged to visit UConn's Special Education Doctoral Program Overview page: <https://specialed.education.uconn.edu/doctoral-program-overview/>

Reach out to Dr. Allison Lombardi ([allison.lombardi@uconn.edu](mailto:allison.lombardi@uconn.edu)) at UConn for more information about this opportunity, to connect with current doctoral scholars, or to talk with faculty/advisors. Applications are due December 1st, 2020.

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## Faculty Research

BU Wheelock faculty hold expertise in interdisciplinary systems serving students with disabilities, including educational systems, policy systems, mental health systems, and family systems. Scholars who apply to LINC at BU Wheelock will develop expertise in these systems, and in systemic factors shaping the experiences and outcomes of students with disabilities and their families.



Dr. Elizabeth Bettini researches factors that contribute to inequities in students' access to skilled special educators. She has expertise in special educators' working conditions and attrition, particularly among beginning teachers and those serving students with emotional/behavioral disorders.



Dr. Jennifer Greif Green researches school-based mental health service provision, especially for students with emotional/behavioral disorders, racial/ethnic disparities in mental health service access, and bullying prevention.



Dr. Nathan D. Jones researches teacher development and teacher quality, with a specific focus on developing and validating tools to assess the effectiveness of special education teaching. He is also currently exploring innovative approaches to teacher preparation, including how to better prepare general educators to work with students with disabilities.



Dr. Zachary Rossetti studies experiences of families with children with and without intellectual disabilities (IDD) and autism spectrum disorder, focusing on family engagement in education and sibling roles and relationships. His research also examines social interactions and friendships between students with and without IDD, including how educators facilitate social interactions and friendship opportunities.

UConn Neag School faculty hold expertise in implementation of interventions and intervention systems for students with disabilities and their teachers, including literacy, social-behavioral, and transition interventions. Scholars who apply to LINC at UConn's Neag School will develop expertise in educational interventions and research on effective interventions to improve the experiences and outcomes of students with disabilities.



Dr. Devin Kearns researches reading disability—including dyslexia—and reading interventions for elementary- and middle school-age children.



Dr. Michael Coyne has expertise in beginning reading and early vocabulary intervention, school-based experimental research, multi-tiered systems of support, and effective practices for students with learning disabilities.



Dr. Allison Lombardi studies transition from adolescence to adulthood, with a particular focus on college and career readiness and higher education experiences of underrepresented groups, including students with disabilities.



Dr. Jennifer Freeman studies the effects of multi-tiered systems of support such as Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS) on outcomes at the high school level for high-risk student groups including students with disabilities. She is particularly interested in improving graduation rates across and within student groups. She also studies professional development methods for improving teacher's use of evidence based classroom management strategies.



Dr. Brandi Simonsen conducts research, publishes, teaches, and provides training/technical assistance in the areas of school- and class-wide PBIS, positive and proactive professional development supports for teachers, and applications of PBIS in alternative education settings.