



## PHD FELLOWSHIP OPPORTUNITY

The UBC Stober Foundation Fellowship Program has been established as a catalyst for excellence in health-related research and student training within the School of Health and Exercise Sciences at UBC's Okanagan campus.

## TESTING THE EFFICACY OF A COMMUNITY-BASED DIABETES PREVENTION PROGRAM

Primary Supervisor: Mary Jung

Supervisory team: Kathleen Martin Ginis, Heather Gainforth

### **Informing the development of a locally- and culturally-tailored diabetes prevention program.**

One in three Canadians is living with diabetes or prediabetes. Regular exercise and a healthy diet give people living with prediabetes their best chance of avoiding type 2 diabetes (T2D). Many people living with prediabetes know this, but lack the support to bring behavioural changes into their lives already packed with obligations. Past interventions have failed to respond to diverse regional needs. Small Steps for Big Changes is an evidence- and community-based diet and exercise counselling intervention that has demonstrated positive, potent effects that are maintained 12-months after program completion. The Stober Foundation Fellowship directly funds a 4-year research study that will determine which factors support or inhibit implementation and scale-up of Small Steps for Big Changes to Canadians at high risk of Type 2 Diabetes.



## ABOUT THE FELLOWSHIP

### Project Overview

Every Canadian born today and in the future is projected to have a 50% chance of developing diabetes, primarily due to causes of physical inactivity and obesity. Student research involvement in Small Steps for Big Changes, a diabetes prevention program targeting the promotion of regular physical activity and a healthy diet, has demonstrated success at reducing excess weight, improving diet quality, reducing HbA1c, and most critically, maintaining these changes up to 12 months after completion of the program. This project will be conducted in which cases of type 2 diabetes are prevented across Canada through implementation of Small Steps for Big Changes at broad scale.

### Background

Regular exercise and a healthy diet give people living with prediabetes their best chance of avoiding type 2 diabetes (T2D). Many people living with prediabetes know this, but lack the support to bring behavioural changes into their lives already packed with obligations. Past interventions have failed to respond to diverse regional needs. Meaningful partnerships with community members and organizations are fundamental for sustainably delivering effective diabetes prevention programs, and vital for the type of scale-up necessary to sizably reduce and sustain lower T2D rates on a population level. Small Steps for Big Changes is an evidence- and community-based diet and exercise counselling intervention that has demonstrated positive, potent effects that are maintained 12-months after program completion. Small Steps for Big Changes provides a platform that can be tailored to diverse community settings, self-identified patient needs, and delivered at broad scale. Building off this success, we have now translated Small Steps for Big Changes into a scalable, virtual diabetes prevention program. A choice between virtual and in-person program delivery can enhance implementation feasibility and increase access for individuals at high risk of developing T2D. Poised for Impact: Core tenets of successful scale-up are multi-sectoral partnerships and an adaptable intervention model that ensures reach to diverse communities. To enable this dissertation work, the supervisor has developed partnerships with 28 YMCAs across 4 provinces that are committed to deliver and sustain Small Steps for Big Changes, patient networks, and patients partners in each province. These valuable partnerships are integral to adapting program content to reflect diverse local contexts.

Visit [hes.ok.ubc.ca/stober-fund](https://hes.ok.ubc.ca/stober-fund) for more information.



### About the Stober Foundation PhD Fellowships

The Stober Foundation Fellowship Program has been established as a catalyst for excellence in health-related research and student training within the School of Health and Exercise Sciences at UBC's Okanagan campus. The Stober Foundation PhD Fellowship program funds four, four-year PhD Fellowships within the School of Health and Exercise Science. The Fellowships will begin in 2021, with the generous support of \$25,000/year for four years for four exceptional trainees. The successful Stober Fellow will be enrolled in the PhD in Kinesiology at UBC Okanagan, which is a research-intensive program. The Stober Foundation PhD Fellowships are based on research excellence and ongoing funding will be contingent on appropriate progression through the degree program.

### HOW TO APPLY

The Stober Fellowship funding is available for a motivated student interested in investigating implementation science on a community-based diabetes prevention program. The successful student will be supervised by Dr. Mary Jung and should have a track-record of research in health behaviour change. Previous experience working with community populations would be an asset.

**Interested applicants should email Dr. Mary Jung ([mary.jung@ubc.ca](mailto:mary.jung@ubc.ca)) directly with a CV and a statement of interest.**



THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

School of Health and Exercise Sciences

Faculty of Health and Social Development  
Okanagan Campus