I am a second-year MA/PhD student in the department of Family Social Science applying for the Mary Ellen McFarland Assistantship, the M. Janice Hogan Fellowship, and the Eva Donelson Wilson Fellowship. I have a current graduate GPA of 4.0 with no incompletes. I am making excellent progress towards both my master’s and doctorate degrees and meeting program milestones on time (see abbreviated vita and milestone checklist). By the end of my fourth semester, I will have completed all of the required credits for the master’s degree (most of which also count towards the doctorate program requirements) and have defended my master’s thesis. I am a first author or co-author on three conference proposals that have been submitted to the 73rd Annual NCFR conference, two of which are using data from the Parenting 2.0 project, and am also assisting in the preparation of two journal articles, both of which are using data from the Parenting 2.0 project. To expand my research experience outside of the Parenting 2.0 project, I am a volunteer graduate research assistant on the After Deployment: Adaptive Parenting Tools (ADAPT) project 5 hours/week. I have also gotten involved in the new Center for Personalized Prevention Research Early Career Investigator Network, as I am interested in pursuing a career in prevention science. Ultimately, my career goal is to be a tenured faculty in family science and regularly contribute to peer-reviewed family science journals.

I am applying for the Mary Ellen McFarland Assistantship, the M. Janice Hogan Fellowship, and the Eva Donelson Wilson Fellowship to support my continuing involvement with the Parenting 2.0 project during the fall 2011 and spring 2012 semesters. Specifically, the goals for the Parenting 2.0 project in 2011-2012 are to: (1) Conduct targeted recruitment to increase diversity in the current sample, (2) Update the survey to include questions specifically for parents in military families and recruit military families, (3) Analyze data, write reports, and write empirical articles, and (4) Collect qualitative data from parents. I have assisted in many aspects of the Parenting 2.0 project, including conducting literature reviews, identifying gaps in the research, creating the online survey, receiving IRB approval, and launching the online survey. I have also assisted with data management, data cleaning, and some data analysis.

So far, the Parenting 2.0 project has collected data on parents’ technology use and online activities from 1,600 parents across the United States. However, the majority of our sample is Caucasian, high income and highly educated parents. Our data currently underrepresents ethnic minorities, low income and less educated parents. One of the project’s goals during the fall and spring semesters is to conduct additional target recruitment to add diversity to our current sample. Obtaining a more diverse sample will increase the generalizability of our results as well as increase subsample sizes so we can conduct comparisons between different groups of parents (high income vs. low income, more education vs. less education, etc.), which ultimately will strengthen manuscript publications and conference presentations. Academic year funding would support my involvement in assisting with brainstorming recruitment strategies, preparing and disseminating additional recruitment materials, and monitoring data collection (specifically changes in the composition of our current sample).

A second project goal for the fall and spring semesters is to learn more about how parents in military families use technology and the Internet in general and for parenting. We plan to update the Parenting 2.0 survey to include a series of questions regarding military parents’ technology use. This process would involve researching how military parents have traditionally been asked about their military status and involvement, deciding which items to add or subtract from the current Parenting 2.0 survey, making changes to the Parenting 2.0 survey using the CEHD survey tool, and conducting target recruitment of military parents. I am experienced in conducting literature reviews as well as making changes to the Parenting 2.0 survey in the CEHD
survey tool. I am equipped to assist with updating the Parenting 2.0 survey to collect data from parents in military families.

My adviser and I also plan to delve deeper into the Parenting 2.0 data with the goal of writing additional data reports as well as publishing empirical articles in family journals. Additional work with the data will help us determine future areas of research, write additional reports, and publish empirical articles in family journals. Ultimately, working more closely with the data and writing additional reports and papers will help secure future funding to support the continuation of the Parenting 2.0 project.

Lastly, one of the next steps of the Parenting 2.0 project is to collect qualitative data from parents. Qualitative data would enhance our understanding of parents’ accessing and using resources online, and would complement the quantitative data already collected. The Parenting 2.0 research team has already developed an interview protocol for conducting interviews with parents. These interview questions will help us collect data about parents’ experiences of using technology and the Internet that is not possible to obtain using quantitative methods. Sample interview prompts and questions include: “Tell me about how you use the internet as a source of support,” How does the Internet help create or maintain your connection with others?”, and “What does social networking mean to you as a parent?” Academic year funding would support my assisting with finalizing the interview protocol, recruiting parents for interviews, conducting interviews, transcribing interviews, and writing empirical articles based on this data.

Ultimately, the Mary Ellen McFarland Assistantship, the M. Janice Hogan Fellowship, and the Eva Donelson Fellowship would support my continued work on the Parenting 2.0 project. Continuing with the project will provide further experience with collecting data using the Internet, conducting targeted recruitment of underrepresented population, adapting online surveys, writing data reports and empirical papers, and conducting qualitative research. The additional data collected during the fall and spring semesters will be used in paper publications and conference presentations, which will add greatly to my professional development. These papers and presentations will be used as references on future funding applications and project proposals.

I have shared plans and goals for the 2011-2012 academic year with my adviser and discussed her availability for the academic year. She has expressed that she is available to supervise my continued involvement with the Parenting 2.0 research project, and we will have weekly project meetings beginning in September.