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Graduate Connections



University of Nebraska–Lincoln

A Newsletter for UNL Graduate Students published by the Office of Graduate Studies

August 2008

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Navigating Graduate School

Events, advice and strategies to help you succeed in Graduate School at UNL

SUCCESS IN GRADUATE SCHOOL

IT’S TRUE. There’s no perfect formula for negotiating graduate school. However, many people have thought about and written on this topic, and everyone who has gone to graduate school seems to agree on some common themes. Obviously, choosing an adviser, and to a lesser degree a supervisory committee, is pivotal in determining your experience as a graduate student. After you have chosen an adviser, though, what else should you do to start your graduate career out right?

We offer the following advice:

- **Read – a lot.** This is particularly important in your first few years. Keep notes on the papers you read, summarizing the questions they answer, their contributions and their shortcomings.
- **Try new things.** Push your research in a new direction, perhaps, or take the time to learn about a topic that might not seem directly related to your work. Take a class or two outside your discipline. You even may decide to pursue a different dissertation topic than the one with which you started.
- **Keep a research journal.** Regularly record research activities and questions in a journal. You’ll find your notes very useful when you’re writing papers or your dissertation. Also, it’s important to document your work. Even though most graduate students are never faced with having to justify that their work is their own, it’s wise to protect yourself.
- **Manage your time.** Make regular appointments with your adviser. Set goals for yourself throughout the week. Avoid trying to cram all your research into the night before a meeting with your adviser.

- **Find a mentor.** Whether it is your adviser, another committee member, or even a faculty member or researcher from another department, having a source of advice and support is invaluable.

It's also important to plan your graduate career, rather than just letting it carry you along. Keep in mind what your career goals are after graduate school. If you're pursuing an academic career, consider taking a course in college teaching and try to gain additional teaching experience. Check into the Preparing Future Faculty Program (contact the Office of Graduate Studies or ask your adviser about the program). Begin building your vita **NOW**.

You can also use summer positions to gain experience that may not be easily available within your research group. Summer is a good time to get

outside experience, working in industry or at a research lab, or visiting a group at another university. Many Ph.D. students find that in their final year or two they prefer to focus on their dissertation than to spend time away from UNL, so you may want to look for a position elsewhere during your first couple of summers.

Most advisers are very supportive of their students and want them to succeed. However, advisers do not always have the same priorities as their students. The more you communicate your goals to your adviser, the more he or she can help you. Ultimately, it is your responsibility to make sure you get as much out of graduate school as possible. Remember: you are in control of the process.

Adapted from *The EGSA Handbook: A Guide to Engineering Graduate Life at Cornell University*, The Engineering Graduate Student Association egsa@cornell.edu <http://egsa.cornell.edu> August 2004.

CAMPUSWIDE WORKSHOPS FOR GRADUATE TEACHING ASSISTANTS TUESDAY, AUGUST 19

THE 18TH ANNUAL FALL CAMPUSWIDE WORKSHOPS for Graduate Teaching Assistants, sponsored by the Office of Graduate Studies, are scheduled for Tuesday, August 19, 2008 in the Nebraska Union. The program will feature a variety of concurrent sessions, topical interest groups and a lunch buffet, compliments of the Office of Graduate Studies. This year's keynote speaker is Dr.

Jim Eison, a professor in the Department of Adult, Career and Higher Education at the University of South Florida. The program begins with a welcome at 8:30 a.m. and concludes at 3 p.m. See the complete [schedule](#) and [pre-register](#) on the Office of Graduate Studies web site.

NEW STUDENT WELCOME, FRIDAY, AUGUST 22

MEET FELLOW STUDENTS and learn more about the resources available at UNL and in the community to help ease your transition into graduate school. Scheduled from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. in the UNL City

Campus Union on Aug. 22, the [New Student Welcome](#) features a resource fair, a complimentary lunch and door prizes. [Pre-register](#) now.

FALL 2008 GRADUATE ORIENTATION FOR NEW AND TRANSFER INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS FRIDAY, AUGUST 22

FALL 2008 ORIENTATION for new and transfer international students will take place Friday, Aug. 22, at the City Campus Union. Activities begin with check in from 8 to 10 a.m., followed by various presentations and orientation activities, including the new student welcome sponsored by the Office of Graduate Studies.

The day includes several small-group information sessions, followed by a campus tour, picnic and other evening social activities.

More information is available from [International Affairs](#).

STAY CONNECTED

VISIT THE [GRADUATE STUDIES WEB PAGE](#). You'll find: the latest master's and doctoral forms, a guide to getting the mentoring you deserve, an online handbook for graduate teaching assistants, a list of external funding opportunities, the *Graduate Bulletin*,

a list of student services for graduate students, the guidebook for preparing a thesis or dissertation, past issues of *Graduate Connections*, a description of the doctoral hooding ceremony, and a host of other helpful resources.

MARK YOUR CALENDAR!! – BARBARA LOVITTS COMES TO CAMPUS MONDAY, OCTOBER 13

Dr. Barbara Lovitts, Senior Research Associate at Abt Associates and author of *Making the Implicit Explicit: Creating Performance Expectations for the Dissertation*, will be on campus Octo. 13 to deliver two presentations at the Wick Alumni Center. The first presentation, targeted for department chairs, graduate chairs and graduate faculty, will focus on the importance of explicit performance standards for producing quality dissertations. This session is tentatively scheduled for 9-11 a.m. For more information, go to <http://graduate.unl.edu/rsvp/lovitts1.php>.

Following the morning session, graduate students are invited to bring their faculty advisers, supervisory committee members to lunch (11:30 a.m.-1 p.m.) Dr. Lovitts will discuss the transition to independent research and the factors that influence degree completion. For more information, go to <http://graduate.unl.edu/rsvp/lovitts2.php>.

Barbara Lovitts earned a B.A. in behavioral sciences from the University of Chicago, an M.S. in experimental psychology from the University of Wisconsin, and a Ph.D. in sociology from the University of Maryland. She is the author of *Leaving the Ivory Tower: The Causes and Consequence of Departure from Doctoral Study* and *Making the Implicit Explicit: Creating Performance Expectations and Assessing the Outcomes of Doctoral Education*.

THIRTY-EIGHT STRATEGIES FOR COMPLETING YOUR DISSERTATION

1. Select a topic early in your doctoral program.
2. Ensure your topic is doable in one year.
3. Develop a clear statement of your research problem and solidify the scope of your project.
4. Select a dissertation chair/mentor who fits with your temperament and work style.
5. Establish a dissertation timeline with realistic deadlines.
6. Use the “planning backwards” process.
7. Set up a regular work schedule and work place.
8. Commit at least five days a week to working on the dissertation.
9. Arrange a work area with minimal visual distractions.
10. Limit new commitments (e.g., teaching a new course); learn to say no!
11. Maintain firm boundaries around your dissertation writing time.
12. Practice time management, establishing daily goals.
13. Set up small milestones and deadlines; track and reward your progress in reaching them.
14. Create outlines for individual chapters so you'll know where you're going.
15. Maintain a running “to do” list to ease getting in and out of your work.
16. Alternate periods of researching and writing.
17. Begin by writing in short bursts, aiming to complete at least half a page every half hour; do your new writing before editing the previous day's work.
18. Consider writing in “waves,” from a general overview of a topic/ variable (what you know now), to more specific points, then to very specific information (e.g., statistics).

19. Experiment with methods of visual organization (mind maps, posts on walls).
20. Use binders for the chapters you've completed.
21. Keep all your writing and drafts until the dissertation is done; you may need work you rejected early in your discussion or in revisions.
22. Use "waiting time" to edit and revise your work.
23. Arrange regular meetings and frequent contact with your dissertation adviser.
24. Be proactive in seeking feedback from your adviser; ask for help when you get stuck.
25. Stay connected to other faculty who can assist you.
26. Tell others about your timeline and plans to finish.
27. Develop a peer support group (e.g., departmental, campus, on-line).
28. Partner with a research buddy to ensure accountability.
29. Don't compare yourself to other students completing the dissertation.
30. Keep a manageable number of references.
31. Use bibliographic software to help with your references.
32. Ensure you have adequate academic support (e.g., committee members, statistical or editing help); emotional support (e.g., family, friends, peers); and administrative support (research assistance, office space/help).
33. Take some time off when you absolutely need it.
34. Eat nutritious foods, rest well, and exercise regularly.
35. Don't quit! Convince yourself that you can succeed and learn from this experience.
36. Attend at least two departmental defenses to get familiar with the process.
37. Practice your defense by attending conferences and scheduling "practice defenses" with friends, colleagues and a few faculty.
38. Participate in the final graduation ceremony; it's wonderful to be "hooded" and presented as a "doctor"!

Adapted in part from Jain, Rachna D. (2002). *Get it done: A coach's guide to dissertation success*. Columbia, MD: Moonswept Press, Inc.

Good Practices in Graduate Education

Advice and strategies to strengthen ethics in graduate education

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY: A LETTER TO MY STUDENTS

Bill Taylor, Emeritus Professor of Political Science, Oakton Community College, Des Plaines, Illinois (btaylor@oakton.edu)

Bill Taylor, professor of political science at Oakton Community College, Des Plaines, Ill., is deeply convinced that academic integrity – on the part of both faculty and students – is an essential part of any true educational experience. He begins each semester with an open letter to his students, explaining his views on academic integrity, offering his promise to students to exercise integrity in his dealings with them, and outlining his expectations of students in the same regard.

How's Your Connection?

You can read **Graduate Connections** on the Office of Graduate Studies web page, receive notification of the latest issue from your department, or have issues delivered directly to you via e-mail. To subscribe, send a message to gsapd2@unl.edu with [subscribe GC] in the subject line and your name and e-mail address in the body of the message.

We invite your feedback and comments about **Graduate Connections**. Can you use the kinds of information you find in this issue? What else can we include to help you make the right connections in the course of your graduate career? Are you engaged in research or other scholarly activity that you want to share with readers of **Graduate Connections**?

Please share your thoughts with us so we can bring you a relevant, lively and useful quarterly publication. Send e-mail to gsapd2@unl.edu.

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The following is an edited excerpt from Mr. Taylor's letter. Graduate Connections received permission to use the material in this letter in ways consistent with its purpose of promoting academic integrity. If you're teaching this fall, consider how you might inform students of your expectations for academic integrity.

INTEGRITY IS IMPORTANT in a college course precisely because integrity is important in all areas of life. If we don't have integrity in the small things, if we find it possible to justify plagiarism or cheating or shoddy work in things that don't seem important, how will we resist doing the same in areas that really do matter, in areas where money might be at stake, or the possibility of advancement, or our esteem in the eyes of others?

Personal integrity is not a quality we're born to naturally. It's a quality of character we need to

nurture, and requires practice in both meanings of that word (as in practice the piano and practice a profession). We can be persons of integrity only if we practice it every day.

What does that involve for teacher and students through each stage of a college course? As you'll see, academic integrity basically requires the same things of students as it requires of teachers.

I. Preparation for Class

Instructor's commitment

- Reread the text (even when I've written it myself).
- Clarify information I might not be clear about.
- Prepare the class with an eye toward what is current today (and not simply rely on past notes).
- Plan the session to make it worth your while to be there.

Student's commitment

- Read the text before coming to class.
- Clarify anything you're unsure of (including looking up words you don't understand).
- Formulate questions you might have so you can ask them in class.

II. In Class

Instructor's commitment

- Show up for all class sessions, unless I'm simply unable to do so.
- Come to class on time and stay the full time.
- Use class time to fulfill the objectives of the course.
- Do my best to answer your questions.
- Honestly acknowledge when I don't have an answer or don't know something, and then go out and get an answer by the next class.
- Both encourage you and give you an equal opportunity to participate in class discussions.
- Contain you if your enthusiasm for participating in the discussions makes it difficult for others to participate.
- Assume you are prepared for class and I won't embarrass you if I call on you, even if your hand isn't up.
- Respect the views you express and expect others to do the same.
- Make clear when I am expressing an opinion, and refrain from imposing on you my views on controversial issues.

Student's commitment

- Show up for all class sessions, unless you're simply unable to do so.
- Come to class on time and stay the full time.
- Make good use of class time by being engaged in what's going on.
- Ask questions about anything you don't understand, not just for your own sake but because other students might not realize that they also don't understand.
- Participate in the class discussions and contribute your thinking to the shared effort to develop understanding and insight. (Remember that even something that's clearly wrong can contribute to the discussion by stimulating an idea in another student.)
- Monitor your own participation to allow for and encourage the participation of others.
- Respect other students and their ideas.
- Refrain from holding side-conversations that distract others from the class discussion.

III. With Regard to Exams

Instructor's commitment

- Do my best during class time to prepare you for exams.
- Be available during office hours or at arranged times to work with you individually to help you get ready for exams.
- Develop meaningful exam questions that will test not only the course content, but also your ability to express and defend intelligent judgments about that content.
- Carefully monitor the exam so honest students will not be disadvantaged by others who might choose to cheat if given the opportunity.
- Give careful consideration to your answers when evaluating them and assigning a grade.

Student's commitment

- Come to class having done your best to prepare for the exam, including seeking the instructor's help if you need it.
- Make full use of the time available to write the best answers you can.
- Accept your limitations and don't try to get around them by using cheat sheets, copying or seeking help from another student.
- Avoid giving help to other students during the exam.

IV. With Regard to Written Assignments

Instructor's commitment

- Devise meaningful assignments that grow out of and further the work done in the classroom.
- Provide you with a clear description of each assignment so you know what is expected of you and what I'll be looking for when I grade it.
- Give due and careful consideration to your paper when evaluating it and assigning a grade.
- Confront you if I suspect you have plagiarized or in other ways not handed in work that is entirely your own.

Student's commitment

- Start your research and writing early enough to give yourself time to do your best work.
- Hand in a paper that you yourself have written specifically for this course and not borrowed from someone else or recycled from an earlier course.
- Be satisfied with nothing less than your best work.
- Seek only appropriate help from others (such as proof-reading or discussing your ideas with someone else to gain clarity in your thinking).
- Give full and proper credit to your sources.

More on the need to credit sources:

By its very nature, education and the accumulation of knowledge is a shared enterprise.

None of us has the time, let alone the background knowledge required, to learn everything on our own. Virtually everything we know has come to us because others have taken the time to think about something, research it, then share what they've learned with us in a class lecture or, more likely, an article or book. This is every bit as true for a teacher as it is for students.

There'd be very little to teach if all an instructor could talk about is what she's learned solely on her own.

In a class lecture it would be too disruptive to stop and cite all sources. All of us know that the teacher is sharing with students the things he's learned from hundreds of different authors, bringing those ideas together into a coherent whole.

The same is true for students, who are expected to read about the research of others and bring together their ideas in such a way that makes sense to them and the instructor. Therefore, it's essential to cite sources in any research paper. The academic reasons for doing so are to give credit to those who have done the original research and to allow the instructor to look at the sources to find out if students have properly understood what the author was trying to say.

But at a practical level, citing sources is a way to show you've done the assignment. Citations (along with the bibliography) show you've consulted a variety of resources as the assignment required. They also acknowledge your indebtedness to those authors. So don't feel you need to hide the fact that you're drawing from your sources. That's what it's all about.

V. With Regard to Your Final Grade

Instructor's commitment

Carefully weigh all your grades during the course, as well as the other factors that affect the final grade as spelled out in the syllabus, before assigning a final grade.

Student's commitment

If you feel the instructor has made a mistake in computing a grade, you have a responsibility to come to her as soon as possible prepared to show why you think she's made a mistake.

VI. Failures to Live up to Our Responsibilities

You can expect your teachers to live up to their commitments to academic integrity, and you have every right to call them on it if they don't. At the same time, instructors have a right to expect that students will live up to their commitments, as well.

Which brings me to the most difficult question with regard to academic integrity; what if you become aware of a fellow classmate who is not living up to the principles of academic integrity, but you sense that the instructor is not aware of it? What should you do? You should say something to the student, and if worse comes to worse, you should tell the instructor.

Academic integrity, as with so much in life, involves a system of interconnected rights and responsibilities that reflect our mutual dependence upon one another.

The success of our individual efforts depends on all of us conscientiously exercising our rights and living up to our responsibilities. And the failure of any of us—even just one of us—to do what is required will diminish, however slightly, the opportunity for the rest to achieve their goals.

That is why it's essential for all members of the university community to practice academic integrity, in both senses of the word *practice*. For practice today will lay a solid foundation for practice tomorrow, and the day after that, and the day after that, so that through daily practice, integrity will come to be woven throughout the fabric of our lives, and thus through at least a part of the fabric of society.

Retrieved from: www.academicintegrity.org/educational_resources/ai_articles.php. Edited with permission from the author.

Essential Connections

Critical information about the fundamentals of graduate study at UNL

A TIMELESS AND SOLITARY PAGE

An address delivered by Dr. Azzeddine Azzam, professor of agricultural economics and recipient of the 2008 Excellence in Graduate Education Award, at UNL's May 2008 doctoral commencement & hooding ceremony.

CHANCELLOR PERLMAN, DEAN WEISSINGER, university administration and esteemed faculty, guests and doctoral candidates.

It is an honor and a privilege to have been invited to participate in this year's doctoral commencement ceremony. I accepted the invitation, in part, because I rarely get the opportunity to address a group of doctoral students without being questioned about realism of my assumptions, correctness of my premises, and validity of my underlying theories and statistical inferences. Not to mention being kept after class to answer questions until I am politely asked to leave by a professor impatiently waiting to use the

classroom. More importantly, I find felicity in knowing that after *this* address, I will not be chased back to my office to continue answering more questions. Any questions?

In all seriousness, I want to sincerely congratulate all of today's doctoral candidates. The road to a doctoral degree, as you know, is a long and often arduous one. But, thankfully, it's a road not traveled alone.

Along the way are families providing moral and, often, financial support; student colleagues providing social and intellectual support; and faculty who help turn fledgling dissertation ideas into ideas developed enough to earn a seat at today's ceremony.

Teaching Tip

10 Things to Do on the First Day of Class

BEGINNINGS ARE IMPORTANT. Whether you're teaching a large introductory course for freshmen or an advanced course in your major field, it makes good sense to start the semester off well. Students will decide very early—some say the first day of class—whether they will like the course, its contents, the teacher, and their fellow students.

1. Hit the ground running on the first day of class with substantial content.
2. Give an assignment on the first day to be collected at the next meeting.
3. Give a learning style inventory to help students find out about themselves.
4. Put in writing a limited number of ground rules regarding absence, late work, testing procedures, grading and general decorum, and maintain these.
5. Explain the difference between legitimate collaboration and academic dishonesty; be clear when collaboration is wanted and when it is forbidden.
6. Tell students how much time they will need to study for this course.
7. Greet students at the door when they enter the classroom.
8. Organize. Give visible structure by posting the day's "menu" on chalkboard or overhead.
9. Have students write something related to the course material.
10. Begin to learn students' names. For some suggestions to help you learn names, [click here](#).

For another 91 things to do on the first day of class, point your browser to the [Teaching Tips](#) section of the Office of Graduate Studies Web site.

In preparing for my address today, I browsed through UNL dissertations – now available online – starting with a plant pathology dissertation written in 1902 by Haven Metcalf under the direction of Professor Charles Bessey, and finishing with a chemistry dissertation written this year by Wei An under the direction of Professor Xiao Cheng Zeng.

During the 96 years spanning between these two dissertations, we observe an ever-rising tide of knowledge flowing from UNL. We also observe continuous technological change in how students recorded and transmitted this knowledge (now that you have plenty of spare time, go online and compare the antiquated look of the 1902 dissertation typed on a manual typewriter to the eye-pleasing PDF look of the 2008 dissertation processed on a computer).

In the midst of all of these changes, one section of the dissertation has remained the same: the acknowledgements page. On this timeless and solitary page, doctoral students have, through the years, documented and thanked those who have made it possible for them to be among a privileged few.

Invariably, topping this timeless and solitary page are the mentors whose job is in many ways like the job of a sculptor, but with a twist. A mentor, like a sculptor, starts with a raw stone, but, unlike a sculptor, soon realizes that the stone takes on a life of its own and starts chiseling the mentor. So when you see mentors and students together on the stage today, only they know who chiseled whom the most, and who should really be hooding whom! I am sure that all faculty here today can think of students who have helped challenge and shape their thinking in a positive way.

This brings me to the message I want to leave with the doctoral candidates today. It is not a message to guilt you about your belonging to a privileged few – you have gotten here the old fashioned way and you've earned it. It is not a message about the ethical practice of your craft – I am sure you have been hammered with this awareness through your programs. It is not a message about how to save the world from its current and impending troubles – I wouldn't know where to start; and it is not a message about being tolerant towards others – that would presume that you may not be, and you doubtless all are.

The message I want to leave you with today is about making a positive, tangible and almost immediate difference in your own lives and the lives of others through mentoring. The mentoring I have in mind is not simply giving advice about technical and stylistic matters, but taking personal interest in seeing that a student or a younger faculty colleague does well, if you are heading for a university job; a fellow employee if you are with any other organization, public or private; or a young person in your community.

In doing so, you generate – as we economists call it – a triple dividend: The first dividend is your own personal growth from assuming some responsibility for the development of others



Dr. Azzeddine Azzam

and getting the satisfaction of seeing them do well; the second dividend is the success and growth of your organization, and the third, and perhaps most important dividend, is betterment of your communities, societies and – as a result – the world at large.

Congratulations. May you prosper and, in the process, help others do the same, just as your mentors have done for you. Let's give a round of applause to all the doctoral candidates, their mentors, and all those they have acknowledged on that timeless and solitary page in their dissertations.

Professional Development Network

Events, workshops, tips and strategies to give graduate students a leg up in launching a professional career

THINK "NEXT STAGE"

"To succeed in your next position, determine the skills needed in that position and then minimize any difference between your skills and the needed skills. Start to behave as if you are in the next position."

– Dr. David G. Payne, Associate Vice President, Higher Education Division, Educational Testing Service

THE "NEXT STAGE" APPROACH (Reis, 1997) to professional preparation requires you to "think ahead, look ahead, and . . . act ahead" of the stage you currently occupy. Begin by assessing your current skills and abilities. One way to gauge professional development needs is to develop a draft of your curriculum vitae. As you categorize your accomplishments (awards) and experiences (teaching, research, publications, presentations), look at the gaps. In which areas do you need to strengthen your skills?

Rick Reis, moderator of the [Tomorrow's Professor listserv](#), provides the following suggestions for developing the competencies (and confidence) needed to advance you to the next stage.

Research. Look for ways to engage in activities with faculty and students from other disciplines or departments. Seek advice from your adviser on collaborative research opportunities.

Review Papers, Proposals, or Research

Presentations. Find opportunities to review papers, grants and proposals written by others. Start by talking to your adviser or checking out volunteer opportunities with your disciplinary association.

Teach. Develop your teaching skills by leading a recitation or taking full responsibility for a course. Document your work in the classroom by participating in UNL's Teaching Documentation Program. To learn more, contact Dr. Richard Lombardo at rlombardo2@unl.edu.

Write a Proposal. Write a grant application for research or a fellowship. Attend the Office of Research grantwriting seminar, offered annually in October and/or March.

Publish. Co-authorship is fine, but make sure you publish at least one article in which you are the first author.

Present at Conferences. Establish a record of giving research presentations at conferences in which faculty and/or industrial researchers are present.

Be a Mentor. As you advance in your graduate career, find ways to play a more formal role in the supervision of students, both undergraduate and graduate. If you'd like to mentor a UNL undergraduate researcher preparing for graduate school, contact Carol Boehler (cboehler2@unl.edu), program coordinator of the McNair Scholars Program.

Reis notes you should ask yourself the following question at each stage of your graduate career: Am I likely to encounter this situation as a professor or future industrial scientist or engineer, and, if so, what can I learn from it that will help to better prepare me for such a role?

By asking questions (thinking ahead), observing others (looking ahead) and acquiring experiences (acting ahead), you'll be better prepared to assume that "next position" in your professional career.

Reis, R. M. (1997). *Tomorrow's Professor: Preparing for Academic Careers in Science and Engineering*. Wiley-IEEE Press, Inc. New York.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT SERVICES AVAILABLE FROM THE OFFICE OF GRADUATE STUDIES

Fall campus-wide workshops for TAs
Institute for International Teaching
Assistants
Preparing Future Faculty Program

Professional development workshops
Professional development courses
Teaching Documentation Program
Assistance gathering student feedback

Individual consultation on teaching,
careers, job searches
Advice on creating an academic career
portfolio

Interactions

Personal achievements of graduate students, research reports, teaching successes, calls for collaboration and student-to-student interaction

GRADUATE STUDENT ASSOCIATION NEWS

UNL'S GRADUATE STUDENT ASSOCIATION (UNL-GSA) is a voice for graduate students at UNL. Please visit our [Web site](#) for information about our meetings, initiatives and events. To receive notices about UNL-GSA news and events, join the UNL-GSA listserv! Send an e-mail to: Listserv@unl.edu. In the body of the e-mail type the following: SUBSCRIBE UNL-GSA Firstname Lastname

GSA Social Events- August 2008

Aug. 22 – 7-9 p.m. Social hour at Yia Yia's Pizza, 1423 0 Street. Free pizza! Come meet the GSA executive committee (Look for our bright yellow GSA T-Shirts!) This is a great chance for new students to quiz returning students about what's fun in Lincoln.

Aug. 30 – 7:30p.m. Ice cream social and tour of Hyde Memorial Observatory for graduate students and their families. Meet at Holmes Lake Park, near the observatory. Take Holmes South Shore Road off of S. 70th St. Follow the signs to the observatory.

Social events in the coming months will be advertised through your department representatives and listed on our website: <http://www.unl.edu/gsa/events.shtml>

This Fall

UNL-GSA is planning to develop, distribute and evaluate a comprehensive survey of graduate students. We want to know who graduate students are so we can serve them well. Look for our survey in your inbox later this fall. We're offering some fabulous incentives for participation.

Get Involved

UNL-GSA Legislative Assembly members are elected / appointed by their respective departments. Assembly members serve as your department's voice and liaison

to the GSA executive committee, so we know what you need and want as a graduate student. The Legislative Assembly meets the second Tuesday of every month. To locate your department's representative see: <http://www.unl.edu/gsa/dept.shtml>

If you are the current representative and plan to serve again in the fall, or if your department needs a representative and you would like to serve, send an e-mail to gsa@unl.edu or contact the graduate chair in your department. If you would like to get involved in other ways, there's a place for you with GSA. Our committee positions are open to all graduate students. Available committee positions are posted at www.unl.edu/gsa/committees.shtml

New Executive Committee

These students have been elected to serve on the Executive Committee for the 2008-2009 academic year. Please feel free to contact them with any questions.

Brenda Pracheil, School of Natural Resources: *Executive chair* (bprache2@bigred.unl.edu)

Kristen Javorsky, Teaching, Learning and Teacher Education: *Vice chair, internal affairs* (javorsky@bigred.unl.edu)

Leslie Martinez, Psychology: *Vice chair, external affairs* (lmartinez520@gmail.com)

Russell Hendrix, Nutrition: *Vice chair, finance* (rhendri7@unlserve.unl.edu)

Benjamin Blackford, Management: *Vice chair, legislative affairs* (blkfrd@unlserve.unl.edu)

Avery Paulson: *Vice chair, information* (apaulson@bigred.unl.edu)

Elizabeth Andrews, Textiles, Clothing and Design: *Vice chair, public relations* (eandrews1@gmail.com)

Funding Opportunities

A sampling of information on fellowships, scholarships, competitions and other funding prospects

EXTERNAL FELLOWSHIPS DATABASE

THE GRADUATE STUDIES WEB SITE has a page with information about more than 600 different external fellowships. The files are organized in table format with fellowship titles, descriptions, deadline dates and Web addresses. You can search subject areas or view the entire collection in one file. The site can be

accessed at www.unl.edu/gradstudies/current/funding-external.shtml.

For additional fellowship assistance, contact Jane Schneider at jschneid@unlnotes.unl.edu.

AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF HISPANICS IN HIGHER EDUCATION OUTSTANDING DISSERTATIONS COMPETITION

THIS COMPETITION IS OPEN to anyone who has completed a dissertation that focuses on Hispanics in higher education **or** to any Hispanic who has completed a dissertation in the social sciences between June 1, 2006 and Aug. 1, 2008. Dissertations are eligible if they are in domains related to the Educational Testing Services (ETS) corporate mission, including education, linguistics, psychology, statistics, testing, and so forth. Dissertations in the humanities, sciences,

technology, engineering and mathematics are **not** eligible.

Deadline: 09/8/08

Award amounts: \$5,000, \$2,000, and \$1,000

www.aahhe.org/OutstandingDissertationsCompetition2008.aspx

SPENCER FOUNDATION DISSERTATION FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM

THE SPENCER FOUNDATION DISSERTATION FELLOWSHIP Program encourages a new generation of scholars from a wide range of disciplines and professional fields to undertake research relevant to the improvement of education. These fellowships support individuals whose dissertations show potential for bringing fresh and constructive perspectives to the history, theory, or practice of formal or informal education anywhere in the world.

Although the dissertation topic must concern education, recipients may be in any academic discipline or professional field. Candidates should be interested in pursuing further research in education once the doctorate is attained. For more information, go to the Spencer Foundation's [Dissertation Fellowships](#) page. Applications are due in November for fellowships that can begin as early as June 2009.

FORD FOUNDATION DIVERSITY FELLOWSHIPS

THE FORD FOUNDATION DIVERSITY FELLOWSHIPS seek to increase the ethnic and racial diversity of the nation's college and university faculties, to maximize the educational benefits of diversity, and to increase the number of professors who can and will use diversity as a resource for enriching the education of all students. The Fellowship grants awards at the predoctoral, dissertation and postdoctoral levels to students who demonstrate excellence, a commitment to diversity and a desire to enter the professoriate.

The 2009 fellowships competition is currently scheduled to open in early September. Please continue to monitor the [Ford Foundation Diversity Fellowships](#) Web page for further announcements regarding the 2009 competition as updated information becomes available. Program guidelines for the 2008 fellowships competitions are currently available for general program information purposes.

AMERICAN WATER WORKS ASSOCIATION ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

THE ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT AWARD encourages academic excellence by recognizing contributions to the field of public water supply. All masters theses and doctoral dissertations relevant to the water supply industry are eligible. The manuscript must reflect the work of a single author and be submitted

during the competition year in which it was submitted for the degree.

Deadline: October 1

Award amounts: Doctoral dissertation: First, \$3,000; Second, \$1,500; Masters thesis: First, \$3,000; Second, \$1,500

NSF GRADUATE FELLOWSHIPS

AWARDED FOR STUDY in mathematical, physical, biological, and social sciences; engineering; science education; and in the history and philosophy of science. For U.S. citizens, nationals, and permanent residents at or near the beginning of graduate study.

Three years of support. Intended for students who are in the early stages of their graduate study.

Deadline: November

www.fastlane.nsf.gov/grfp/

NOTE: UNL's Office of Research sends out weekly announcements of funding opportunities, several of which relate to fellowships in a wide variety of fields of study. If you are interested in receiving these announcements, you can subscribe to the listserv by sending an e-mail to Nathan Meier at nmeier2@unl.edu. Funding announcements archives also are available at: <http://research.unl.edu/sp1/oldfa.shtml>.

Resources for Researchers

Research tips and other information for graduate researchers

NURAMP WORKSHOPS OFFERED IN SEPTEMBER AND OCTOBER

THE OFFICE OF RESEARCH is offering a series of workshops for researchers, postdocs, graduate students and research administration staff members on topics ranging from proposal preparation to research

responsibility to managing financial awards. Workshops are scheduled weekly (or bi-weekly) in September and October. For more information or to register, go to <http://research.unl.edu/nuramp>.

RESPONSIBLE CONDUCT OF RESEARCH: VIDEO VIGNETTES

THREE VIDEO VIGNETTES exploring dilemmas often experienced by graduate students in areas of research misconduct, conflicts of interest and authorship designation are available for viewing on the [Office of](#)

[Graduate Studies Web site](#) Each is followed by a set of questions to stimulate discussion among viewers.

REQUIREMENTS FOR USING HUMAN OR ANIMAL SUBJECTS IN GRADUATE RESEARCH

THE *GRADUATE BULLETIN* reflects university policies on research activities involving human subjects or live vertebrate animals, stating that such research “may not be conducted at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln (UNL) unless the research activities have been reviewed and approved by the appropriate board or committee.”

The Institutional Review Board (IRB) reviews projects involving human subject research and the Institutional

Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC) reviews the use of animals in research.

The IRB and IACUC will not review projects already in progress; you must secure approval prior to starting your research. Complete the IRB “New Protocol Submission” form on-line through NUgrant at <http://nugrant.unl.edu>. The “Application to Use Animals” requires completion of a paper form

(although it will eventually be available electronically), accessible at <http://research.unl.edu/orr/qa.shtml>.

Evidence of IRB/IACUC approval must be submitted at the time the final version of the thesis or dissertation is filed.

What is Human Subjects Research? Research is considered to involve human subjects – and must have IRB approval – if it entails use of human tissue or information about living individuals, attained through intervention or interaction with the individuals. If your research involves any information from humans, even if it's obtained through an anonymous survey or a secondary dataset, it may require review. If you have any doubts, please contact the IRB.

Required CITI Training for Human Subjects Research. Any researcher engaged in human subjects research must complete an online training program offered through the Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative in Human Subjects Protections (CITI). The self-paced, web-based tutorial is available at www.citiprogram.org. Most graduate students

should complete the Human Research Curriculum Group 2 basic course for social/behavioral investigators and key research personnel. Biomedical researchers should complete the Group 1 course.

NUgrant IRB Training. Research Compliance Services offers regular training sessions in using NUgrant to submit IRB protocols. Fall training dates are Sept. 3, 9-10:30 a.m., and Oct. 15, 1-2:30 p.m. Register at <http://research.unl.edu/events/irbtraining/>.

Plans for fall also include offering brief NUgrant IRB training sessions at department meetings with grad students. The details aren't finalized, but check with your department in September, or watch for more information on the Office of Research Responsibility [Web site](#). Staff also are available to offer group training sessions that go beyond NUgrant as they are requested by departments or professors, and are willing to either go through details with students over the phone or sit down with them one on one to answer questions. Contact Research Compliance Services at 472-6965.

Announcements

News of note for graduate students

2008-2009 UNL GRADUATE STUDIES BULLETIN

THE 2008-2009 UNL GRADUATE BULLETIN is available online at <http://bulletin.unl.edu>. If you need help

navigating the bulletin, please contact Jane Schneider at jschneid@unlnotes.unl.edu or 472-8670.

SOFTWARE WORKSHOPS

PART OF YOUR STUDENT TECHNOLOGY FEE pays for software workshops offered every semester by Information Services' Student Technology Training. Topics include Photoshop, InDesign, Illustrator, Dreamweaver, Fireworks, Flash, Access, Excel,

PowerPoint, SPSS, MovieMaker and iMovie. All workshops are held at TEAC 142, and computers are provided. Visit [ITG's Web site](#) to view the complete schedule and to enroll. Any questions can be sent to STS-ITG@listserv.unl.edu.

CALL FOR AWARD NOMINATIONS

THE OFFICE OF GRADUATE STUDIES requests nominations for two annual award programs.

Graduate Recognition Awards

- The *Dean's Award for Excellence in Graduate Education Award* honors faculty members whose dedication to graduate students and commitment to excellence in graduate mentoring have made a

significant contribution to graduate education at UNL.

- The *Outstanding Graduate Research Assistant Award* recognizes excellence in graduate student research at UNL.
- The *Outstanding Graduate Teaching Assistant Award* recognizes graduate teaching assistants who

have demonstrated special effectiveness in teaching undergraduates at UNL.

Graduate Award nomination forms are available at www.unl.edu/gradstudies/facstaff/nominations.shtml.

Folsom Distinguished Thesis And Dissertation Awards

The annual *Folsom Distinguished Master's Thesis and Doctoral Dissertation Awards* recognize the outstanding research and creative accomplishments of UNL graduate students. These awards are made possible through a generous gift from the family of Lowe R. and Mavis M. Folsom to the University of Nebraska Foundation.

The recipient of the *Distinguished Master's Thesis Award* will receive a \$500 honorarium. The recipient of the *Distinguished Doctoral Dissertation Award* will receive a \$1000 honorarium.

We are grateful to the Folsom family and the University of Nebraska Foundation for providing this

opportunity to showcase the important scholarly contributions made by our graduate students.

Folsom Award nomination forms are available at www.unl.edu/gradstudies/facstaff/folsom.shtml.

We ask your help in making your students and your colleagues aware of these awards. Please post the [Call for Nominations](#) in a prominent place, and please consider nominating the work of outstanding graduate students in your program or department.

Award recipients will be honored at a reception in the spring semester. Point your browser to the Office of Graduate Studies Web site for a [list of past recipients](#).

Deadline for submitting nominations is Oct. 8. Supporting materials due from nominees and peer faculty may be submitted online. For more information about award nominations, contact Jane Schneider at 402-472-8670 or send e-mail to jschneid@unlnotes.unl.edu.

GRADUATE STUDENT "HEALTHY OPTION" STUDENT PLAN INSURANCE

MUCH OF THE 2008-2009 HEALTH INSURANCE coverage for graduate students remains the same as it was last year. The annual price for 12-month coverage is \$1,162. Some changes in policy as well as coverage have occurred.

- Enrollment periods are fall and spring/summer. Annual enrollments are no longer an option.
- All graduate students are eligible to purchase health insurance through the university. Those students not on assistantships may enroll using WAM! Graduate students holding eligible graduate assistantships or with international status are automatically enrolled.
- The pharmacy portion of the insurance offers an increase in coverage to \$300 per semester.
- Discounts in vision care are available for those insured through this plan.

Graduate assistants and international students may opt out of the coverage by completing a waiver request by Sept. 12. However, international students will have to provide proof of comparable coverage. Internet health insurance policies will not be considered comparable coverage for international student insurance waiver requirements. The University Health Center's insurance coordinator will determine if alternate policies satisfy comparable coverage requirements. (Comparable coverage for international student insurance waiver requirements does not require dental and pharmacy coverage.)

For more information about UNL's Healthy Option Student Plan, view Frequently Asked Questions at www.unl.edu/gradstudies/current/health-faq.shtml. For in-depth questions, call Beverly Heiserman at the University Health Center at 472-7507. For questions regarding eligibility, contact Eva Bachman, doctoral programs & assistantship specialist, at 472-8669.

FULL-TIME CERTIFICATION CHANGES

TWO MAJOR POLICY CHANGES have been enacted to better align UNL's full-time certification with federal guidelines, beginning with the summer 2008 session.

The first change deals with eligibility. In order to file a request for full time certification, a student must have been enrolled at least half-time (4 hours) for the previous two semesters.

The second change affects the length of time a student may use the form. Master's thesis students may use the form for one year. Doctoral candidates may use the form for a maximum of two years.

Master's students who are doing a thesis and have filed a memorandum of courses are eligible to use the certification, as are doctoral students who have passed

their comprehensive exams and been granted candidacy by the Office of Graduate Studies.

Remember, a request for full-time certification must be filed each semester or summer that the status is needed. The form has been changed to allow for more clarity in processing and can be found at <http://research.unl.edu/gradstudies/fulltime/>.

Calendar

Keep connected with the Grad Studies Calendar – important deadlines, dates and dealings you need to know about. For other deadlines related to graduation and degree completion, go to www.unl.edu/gradstudies/current.

EVENTS AND DEADLINES

Aug 19	Workshops for graduate teaching assistants	Oct 13	Barbara Lovitts' seminars on performance standards for producing quality dissertations and the transition to independent research
Aug 22	New Student Welcome		
Oct 8	Deadline to submit graduate award nominations		

MASTER'S DEGREES TO BE CONFERRED DECEMBER 2008

Oct 3	Application for advanced degree
Nov 6	Submit final exam report (or four weeks prior to oral)
Nov 21	Incomplete grades must be removed; submit preliminary copy of thesis (or two weeks prior to oral)
Nov 28	File results of written comprehensive exam and/or option II paper
Dec 4	Final day for oral examination
Dec 5	Deposit thesis and final examination report form; pay binding fee
Dec 20	Commencement

DOCTORAL DEGREES TO BE CONFERRED DECEMBER 2008

Oct 3	Application for advanced degree
Nov 13	Application for final exam report; incomplete grades must be removed
Dec 4	Final day for oral examination
Dec 5	Dissertation deposit; dissertation grades; final fees; final forms
Dec 19	Doctoral hooding and commencement ceremony

Word to the Wise

Tips for graduate students on a miscellany of topics

SQ3R METHOD

Tara Kuther, Writing for About.Com

TO BECOME A MORE EFFICIENT READER, consider the SQ3R method (survey, question, read, recite, review) to help you retain more without having to reread so often.

Survey. Before reading, survey the material. Glance through the topic headings and try to get an overview of the reading. Skim the sections and read the final summary paragraph to get an idea of where the chapter is going. The few minutes you spend surveying

the reading to get an initial orientation will help you organize the material as you read it.

Question. Look at the first heading in the chapter. Turn it into a question. Ask questions to be answered in your reading. This step requires conscious effort, but is worth it as it leads to active reading, the best way to retain written material. Asking questions focuses your concentration on what you need to learn or get out of your reading.

Read. Read the first section of your reading assignment to answer your question. Actively search for the answer to your question. If you finish the section and haven't answered the question, reread it. Read reflectively. Consider what the author is trying to say, and think about how you can use that information.

Recite. Once you've read an initial section, look away and try to recite the answer to your question, using your own words and examples. If you can do this, it means that you understand the material. If you can't, glance over the section again. Once you have the answers to your questions, write them down.

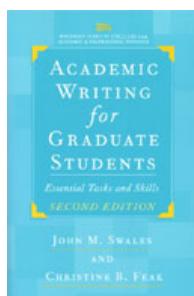
Review. After reading the entire assignment, test your memory by asking yourself the questions that you've identified. Review your notes for an overview of the chapter. Consider how it fits with what you know from the course, your experience and other classes. What is the material's significance? What are the implications or applications of this material? What questions are you left with?

Readers' Corner

Interesting reading for graduate students

ACADEMIC WRITING FOR GRADUATE STUDENTS: ESSENTIAL TASKS AND SKILLS

(2nd Ed., 2004) Michigan Series in English for Academic & Professional Purposes
John M. Swales & Christine B. Feak



RECOGNIZING THAT “graduate students face a variety of writing tasks,” *Academic Writing for Graduate Students* walks readers through the progressive tasks of academic writing, beginning with an overview of the important characteristics of academic writing.

The second edition of this successful guide to writing for graduate-and undergraduate-students has been modified to include updates and replacements of older data sets; an increased range of disciplines such as nursing, marketing, and art history; discussions of discourse analysis; and a

broader discussion of e-mail use that includes current e-mail practices.

Like its predecessor, this second edition of *Academic Writing for Graduate Students*:

- Explains the importance of understanding the intended audience, the purpose of the paper, and academic genres.
- Includes the use of task-based methodology, analytic group discussion and genre consciousness-raising.
- Shows how to write summaries and critiques
- Features “language focus” sections that address linguistic elements as they affect the wider rhetorical objectives.
- Helps students position themselves as junior scholars in their academic communities.



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