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Graduate Connections

University of Nebraska–Lincoln

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

April 2009

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Navigating Graduate School

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

WORKING WITH YOUR SUPERVISOR: WHICH APPROACH IS BEST FOR YOU?

COMPLETING A DOCTORAL PROGRAM involves more than taking courses and writing a dissertation. Many doctoral students also teach, conduct research and begin learning what it means to be a faculty member. Supervision by a faculty adviser or mentor is a key component to successfully fulfilling these roles.

Lee (2008) identified five approaches to supervision that a faculty member might take: functional, enculturation, critical, emancipation and developmental relationship. Each type of supervision takes a different approach to helping doctoral students become independent as researchers, writers and professionals. Understanding these approaches to supervision can help you better understand what to expect from supervisors.

Functional supervisors focus on developing skills and often take on the role of director or project manager. From the first day of graduate school, students are expected to achieve and maintain independence through a timetable of goals. Students of functional supervisors know what they are expected to accomplish right up to graduation.

Supervisors who take the enculturation approach see themselves as gatekeepers to knowledge and resources. Students are given access to their supervisor's knowledge and resources when they are ready; the road to independence happens one step at a time. Rather than mapping out the entire path to graduation, supervisors provide the necessary resources as needed and not before.

The critical thinking approach "addresses such questions as what is the underlying conceptual framework, what are the arguments for and against, what has been considered and what has been left out" (Lee, 2008, p 273). Supervisors who use the critical thinking approach help their students gain independence through questioning their own ideas. Independence is often achieved when the student knows which ideas are worth pursuing.

Supervisors who take an emancipation approach challenge and support students by providing mentoring and sponsorship in academic pursuit. They foster growth in each student through challenges appropriate to each student's developmental level. The emphasis on mentoring helps students achieve independence through self-experience and self-discovery.

When working with a supervisor who takes a developmental relationship approach, a positive relationship and clear outline of expectations is essential. While this type of supervision provides support in the form of encouragement and recognition of achievement, students need to be careful that their supervisor is an appropriate emotional match. A mismatch usually means the student and supervisor are not clear on expectations, possibly causing delays in program completion. Independence is achieved when students begin taking initiative to complete their own projects.

Communication between you and your supervisor is essential to successful degree completion. If you understand the different types of supervision approaches and know which one your supervisor prefers, you can more easily pinpoint the sources of problems or miscommunications if they occur. Whichever approach your supervisor takes, you share responsibility for the quality of mentoring you receive.

Also, your supervision needs are likely to change as you develop advanced skills throughout your academic career. Stay in touch with your adviser. Keep her informed of your goals and expectations. That's the best formula for working effectively with your supervisor.

Lee, A. (2008). How are doctoral students supervised? Concepts of doctoral research supervision. *Society for Research into Higher Education, 33*, 267-281.

TIPS FOR PUBLISHING IN GRADUATE SCHOOL

ONE SKILL THAT CAN BE CRITICAL TO THE SUCCESS OF A GRADUATE STUDENT is the ability to publish. We collected the following tips from experienced faculty who have guided students successfully into the publishing world. If getting published is one of your goals, these bits of advice will give you some insight on how to reach it.

Start early. It takes time to get a paper published. If you want to have an article accepted for publication by the time you complete your graduate program and begin interviewing for a job, plan to submit your work at least one year in advance. In some cases, it can take up to three years to get a paper accepted. The review process and the timing of the review process are things you can't control.

Keep up with current literature and write down good ideas. Staying up to date with research and findings in your field is extremely important. While searching out your literature, skim abstracts (most are available for free), and, if they are truly relevant, think about paying to retrieve the entire article. You might find questions still unanswered in your subject matter worth investigating. When good ideas for papers come along for whatever reason, keep them in a lab book or computer file so you can return to your ideas when you have a chance.

Reserve time for research. Research and writing take a lot of time, and you may need to rearrange your calendar to get something done, If you schedule

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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time for research, you're more likely to get serious work completed.

Get advice. Someone with knowledge and experience willing to critique your paper is invaluable. Your academic adviser is a great resource, but not the only one. Other faculty in your department or in your field of study at other institutions who are familiar with the current research can help you distinguish between good and bad ideas.

Think in terms of potential publications. Your master's thesis or dissertation can be reworked and turned into one or more journal articles. Seminar papers can make good articles if you suggest new data based on original field research. Papers presented at conferences might lead directly to publication because people attending the same conference or in the audience listening to you may be funders, future employers, publishers or editors. Other benefits of presenting at a conference include learning about current research, trading ideas, and introductions to senior researchers and other students in your field – who also may become future collaborators.

Collaborate. Co-author an article with a professor who is working on an interesting project. Offer your services in return for a junior authorship. Co-author with another student who also needs to become an author; sharing the workload of the project benefits you both. You might even find co-authors who could become lifelong colleagues and collaborators.

Know your statistics and methodology. Sometimes research articles will hold up or fail on the basis of the methodology and statistical analyses. Get to know your institution's statistical consultant or statistical department. At UNL, the Nebraska Evaluation and Research (NEAR) Center consults with faculty and graduate students to promote sound statistical, measurement and research methodology. See their web site at cehs.unl.edu/near/

Invest in writing skills. Read and keep these resources on hand for consultation: *The Elements of Style* by W. Strunk, Jr. and E.B. White and *On Writing Well* by William Zinsser.

Get the paper ready for review. Read for punctuation, spelling and grammar. If your first language is not English, have an English speaking person proofread for you to catch and correct errors. Grammar problems or typos may lead the reader to think that if you are careless or sloppy with the structure of the paper, your research and analysis are also careless and sloppy.

Get your work reviewed before submission. Get good criticism about your writing and the organization of the paper, and revise it repeatedly until you have addressed all comments.

Find a journal to publish in. New journals are good publishing prospects because they attract fewer submissions than established ones and accept a higher percentage of those they receive. Rank the journals in your area of study. Look for special opportunities to publish, such as calls for papers and special issues of journals that invite submissions. And be sure your topic is relevant to the journal's focus.

Sources:

Preacher, K.J. 2003. Publishing in graduate school, tips for new graduate students, *Association for Psychological Science Observer,* www.psychologicalscience.org/observer/getArticle.cfm?id=1243.
Stearns, S.C. 2003. Some modest advice for graduate students, *Yale University, Department of Ecology and Evolutionary Biology*, www.eeb.yale.edu/stearns/advice.htm.
Tips on publishing in graduate school. August 2008. *Brains*. philosophyofbrains.com/2008/08/08/tips-on-publishing-in-graduate-school.aspx

HOW TO THINK AND ACT LIKE A WRITER

By Jan Allen, Associate Dean for Ph.D. Programs, Graduate School of Arts & Sciences, Columbia University (reprinted with permission)

DO YOU THINK OF YOURSELF AS A WRITER? Or are you just a graduate student who must write to complete the requirements for your degree, to get published, to get a job? Are you a faculty member who must write to keep your job, to get tenured, to get promoted in your job? It might help if you start to think and act like a writer. Here's how:

1. It's simple. You must write. You can also think, worry, read, fret, take notes, agonize, organize your materials, worry, buy a new desk, fret, sharpen your pencils, agonize, wash your dishes, did I mention worry, eat a snack…but this is not writing. You must write.

2. And you must want to write. Not to finish, or to publish, or to get a job, or to receive approval or affection or recognition…but to write. You must think, "I really want to write today and will create all opportunities to do so, rather than avoiding all opportunities to do so. I am writing today to write. I am writing today because I **want** to write." So all you have to do is write. You don't have to finish. Or meet a deadline or goal. You just have to write. It's freeing. Don't wait until you're ready. Don't wait until everything else is done. Don't wait until you are well rested. Don't wait until you've read every book or article on the topic. You never will be all these things. You will never do all these things. If you wait, you'll never write. Or be a writer. Writers write. (On some of your writing days you will have deadlines so that you will get finished. Those days may not be your most creative. You may not generate new ideas or discover new directions for this or future work. So this if why you must write on those days even when you don't have a deadline. Every day. Writers write.)
3. Writing is hard. Chances are there is nothing wrong with you if you find writing a challenge. Even the very best writers say it's hard. You're in very good company if you find writing hard. So don't **not** write when you find it hard. For most of us, that's an essential part of the process.
4. Commit to writing at least 15 minutes a day. Find what works for you. Write in the morning. At night. On the laptop. On paper. Your forearm. Lamott (1994) commits to writing enough each day to fill a 1"x1" picture frame. Writing everyday contributes to the continuity of your thinking and generating the ideas you need to write. Your mind will function differently when you write every day. We all **think** about our writing every day. But the cognitive processes involved in writing are different from those involved in thinking. You move your project forward when you write.
5. Write. Don't edit. (Yet). "If you try to write and edit at the same time you will do neither well" (Sides, 1991). You have to write before you can revise and edit to get the draft you want.
6. Try to get in the "flow." (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990, 2003). "The task at hand draws one in with its complexity to such an extent that one becomes completely involved in it" (2003, p. 40). The process of writing as well as the outcomes differ when you think and when you write.
7. Good writing takes a long time. To write, edit, revise, you must start early. You must not procrastinate. Here's the dilemma: When you delay your writing until you finally, absolutely must start, you often only then discover that the actual writing is not as difficult as the fear of starting to write. But you no longer have the time you need to produce the excellent work you now know you are capable of. Give yourself time…when not much is on the line.
8. You will become a better writer the more you write. Drafting, even editing, will occur more quickly. After you begin to think like a writer, and act like a writer, you may begin to think like an editor as you write. But it may never get easier. Sorry about that.

Sources

Allen, J. forthcoming, 2009. *The new faculty and graduate mentor.* Sterling, VA: Stylus Publishers

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Good Practices in Graduate Education

Advice and strategies to strengthen ethics in graduate education

THE ETHICS OF AUTHORSHIP

YOU'VE SPENT THE LAST YEAR RESEARCHING and writing an article you're hoping to publish. As you start the task of editing your work, you should also ask yourself, "who deserves authorship credit?"

Authorship, especially for a graduate student, can be a difficult issue. Should your adviser receive credit? What about the other graduate students in your lab who helped run your research experiment?

Establishing who will receive authorship credit before the project begins is always beneficial. However many changes can happen between the conception of your article and the final product. A student who understood she would not receive credit may leave the lab and be replaced with a student who expects the credit. Or you may use a research experiment that wasn't in your original plan. Guidelines for the conduct of research in the intramural research program at NIH state, "for each individual the privilege of authorship should be based on a significant contribution to the conceptualization, design, execution and/or interpretation of the research study, as well as a willingness to assume responsibility for the study." As you begin to consider who deserves authorship credit in your article, take time to think about:

Expectations. Talk about authorship with your faculty supervisor or research partners before you write articles for publication. Does your adviser expect credit on all of your articles or just the ones on which he or she has collaborated? Knowing what to expect from your adviser and research partners before the issue of authorship comes up will prevent potentially awkward and difficult conversations before publication.

Contributors. It's possible you aren't the only person who contributed to writing your article. Even if you wrote every word, take time to consider significant intellectual contributions or development of central ideas from faculty members or other graduate students, or any help you received with revising, editing and approval of the final draft. Include anyone who fits these criteria as an author in your article.

Research. Often, research is a collaborative effort. Identifying which researchers to include as authors in your article is similar to the decisions you'll make about which writing contributors to include. Follow this general rule: Anyone who made a significant contribution to the research design or in gathering data and analyzing results should be considered for authorship credit.

Deciding which contributions to writing and research are significant is not always simple. Talk to your adviser or a trusted faculty member who is not connected to your project. Faculty have the benefit of experience with collaborative publishing that can help you make tough decisions. When it comes to authorship, good decisions are not only beneficial in the short term as you finish your degree, they also help you build collaborative partnerships and maintain your integrity in your field.

Sources:

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Essential Connections

Critical information about the fundamentals of graduate study at UNL

HOW DOES YOUR TEACHING IMPACT YOUR UNDERGRADUATES?

WHETHER YOU TEACH A LAB, recitation or lecture or work with students in a resource room as a tutor, you function as a role model and a mentor, serving the needs of undergraduate students in ways that many faculty can't. But how? How do you, as a graduate teaching assistant, impact your undergraduate students? Do you influence their choice of major? How about their enthusiasm for learning the course material? How about their decision to stay until they complete their undergraduate degree?

Although many TAs are responsible for introductory courses or labs that often determine if a student will major in a particular subject area, O'Neal et al. (2007) found that TAs don't generally influence an undergraduate student's decision to major in one subject area over another. However, their research suggests that TAs can control certain factors students *do* use to make a decision. Here's how you can impact your undergraduates' learning experience at UNL.

Teaching Tip

Help Students Read the Research Literature

Do your undergraduate students seem to have trouble organizing or summarizing the primary or secondary literature in your discipline? Students often want the literature to flow without disagreements, yet we know that challenging old ideas and generating new ones are at the heart of true scholarship. If you are having students review the literature, ask them to classify the articles, Web sites or references they read into one of three categories:

- **standing on the shoulders of the previous generation**: the writer/ scholar sees the field as a steady progression with his/her work building on the work of previous scholars
- **major shift**: the writer is proposing a new theory, creating a new paradigm or sending the field in another direction
- **warring camps**: the writer is challenging the ideas and beliefs put forth by an earlier generation of scholars.

Ask students to use reflective journals to note their observations about what they read by commenting on the four Whats: What happened? So what? Now what? and What does it mean? Not only will this approach help students understand the broader nature of scholarship, it may be a good way to help them organize their own papers or reviews.

Once they leave your class and are no longer assigned things to read, students may need some guidance about what competent professionals in their chose field read regularly. Tell them what journals you read and how they can access them once they are no longer UNL students.

Source: University of the Sciences in Philadelphia

The Personal Touch. Students at a large university can become overwhelmed or lost by the size. They become "little fish in a big pond." As a graduate teaching assistant, you are an important contact point for students, and you can make the university community feel smaller and welcoming. In addition, students tend to be more engaged in their coursework if they believe someone is interested in their performance. Undergraduate students look up to you, the graduate student. These interactions can greatly improve student satisfaction.

Positive Learning Community. Students learn best in an inclusive environment, a factor that as a TA, you control in your classroom. Seek opportunities to learn more about creating a positive environment in your classroom. The annual Campus-wide TA Workshop, designed for both new and seasoned TAs, offers ideas for building rapport with your students and creating a friendly classroom community.

Participation in UNL's Teaching Documentation Program can help you keep a pulse on students' expectations and experiences. Not only can you learn ways to improve your teaching, your students can provide feedback on your teaching, giving you time to identify and respond to any issues that might surface.

Establishing and maintaining a positive and inclusive environment keeps students engaged and interested in your class. Most important, however, it demonstrates you care about teaching and your students.

Fair Grading Practices. Although you may not have a say in determining grading policies for your course, you do have control over how the policies are communicated to your students. Make sure students are informed about your grading policies (e.g., absences, participation and late work) and if there will be any opportunities to earn extra credit.

Provide comments on students' work so they know the 'why' behind their grades. There's nothing more arbitrary to a student than a paper returned with just a grade on it, accompanied by no comments or merely perfunctory ones. The feedback you provide to students should help them improve their writing as well as explain why you graded the work the way you did.

Be sure students know their overall grade at midterm and invite them to ask you for their overall grade at any time during the semester.

Explicitly explaining grading policies, practices and allowing students to know their grades throughout the semester reduces anxiety and allows students to concentrate their attention on the course rather than their grade.

Future Career Decisions. When choosing a major or deciding to continue in an already declared major, students want to know they have a future in that area. Talk to your students about your research when the opportunity presents itself so they can see your undergraduate education at work. If you're teaching a lab or recitation, ask to teach a lecture once or twice during the semester to give your students a chance to see you in a different environment.

Take time to have a discussion with your students about what motivated you to choose and stay in your field. Invite them to ask you questions about resources available to help students choose a career and about alternate careers in your field. You also may want to ask faculty or members of the community in your field to visit your class for a discussion about future careers.

What's in It for You? For graduate students, teaching provides several important professional development benefits. As you gain more experience and take on greater responsibility in the classroom, you develop "transferable" skills that are applicable in various professional positions. For every assignment you grade, e-mail you reply to, or lesson you prepare, you're developing the ability to manage a multitude of tasks. Well-developed time management and multi-tasking skills can be applied to any job.

Teaching well also means you're developing effective presentation skills. Even if you're not planning an academic career, most organizations will expect you to give presentations. And, if you're able to demonstrate that you can teach effectively, it's likely you'll have an edge in the job search.

Graduate teaching assistants, however, also benefit the department as well as the institution. Svinicki (1995) notes that teaching assistants provide invaluable support to busy faculty and, if prepared to teach, can improve the quality of undergraduate education as a whole, which, in the end, contributes to the university's primary mission.

As is the case at most major research universities, teaching assistants make a significant contribution to undergraduate education at UNL. By promoting an atmosphere of trust and respect, creating a positive learning environment, implementing fair and reasonable grading practices, and sharing your enthusiasm and excitement for your field of study with your undergraduate students, you have an opportunity to impact undergraduate students' learning and development well beyond their time in your classroom.

Resources for Teaching Assistants

Handbook for Graduate Teaching Assistants
Motivating Students
Sample Syllabus
Scoring Rubric
Teaching Strategies

O'Neal, C., Wright, M., Cook, C., Perorazio, T., & Purkiss, J. 2007. The impact of teaching assistants on student retention in the sciences. *Journal of College Science Teaching, 36*, pp. 24-29.

Svinicki, M. 1995. A dozen reasons why we should prepare graduate students to teach. *Journal of Graduate Teaching Assistant Development 3* (1): 5-8.

A SUMMER ASSIGNMENT: CREATE/REVISE YOUR COURSE SYLLABUS

OFTEN, THE FIRST THING STUDENTS LOOK FOR on the first day of class is the syllabus. The syllabus gives them an idea of what to expect for grading, when important assignments are due and how much homework to expect. Creating a well thought out and easy to follow syllabus will help your students understand your expectations, how the course fits their educational needs and what they will learn during the semester. A good syllabus will include:

Instructor and Course Information. List your name, office location and hours as well as e-mail address and phone number. If you include both your e-mail address and phone number, be sure to let students know which method of communication you prefer. Include the current semester, course name, day and time the course meets and location. All required materials should also be included. If any materials are on reserve at the library or need to be downloaded, include instructions on how to access these materials.

Learning objectives. Be sure students are aware of what they can expect from you. Being clear about the learning objectives helps students understand how your course fits into their major or general education requirements. Students also will have a better understanding of what they will learn during the semester.

Grading policies. Nothing invokes anxiety among students like uncertainty about grades. Include your grading rubric in the syllabus along with how to achieve each grade band. Let students know if attendance affects grading and if extra credit opportunities will be available during the semester. Outline any other actions that will affect grades (late work, class participation, dropping the lowest quiz grade, etc.).

Tomorrow's Professor Listserv

Are you looking for new ways to engage your students? Or maybe you need advice on how to construct good multiple choice questions. Dr. Richard Reis of Stanford University moderates an e-mail listserv with helpful articles for teaching assistants. Whether you're just starting out as a TA or you're a seasoned pro, you'll benefit from the tips and articles sent out by Dr. Reis.

To join Tomorrow's Professor twice weekly listserv for free and valuable teaching advice, please visit: https://mailman.stanford.edu/mailman/listinfo/tomorrows-professor.

Course schedule or calendar. Outline assignments and readings for the semester in a schedule or calendar. Include topics or themes that correspond with the readings, test and quiz dates; group project dates, if necessary, and any days the class won't be meeting during the regular time.

More tips on creating a good syllabus can be found online in the Handbook for Graduate Teaching Assistants.

Professional Development Network

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

IT'S NEVER TOO LATE TO START: A TIMELINE FOR THE ACADEMIC JOB SEARCH

Courtesy of Julie Miller Vick and the late Mary Morris Heiberger
Ph.D. advisers, U. Penn., and authors of The Academic Job Search Handbook

PLANNING A CAREER IN ACADEMIA? As the list below demonstrates, you'll want to begin planning at least 24 months in advance. Given today's job market, David Jensen, a writer and speaker on career issues worldwide, says to plan "on a truly significant effort." He notes that new grads will often invest only "20 to 30 minutes a day in their job search." According to Jensen, "In 2009, that will get you a few 'thank you' responses from human resources–and little else. If you aren't spending two hours a day on your search, you're unlikely to get any kind of traction at all."

So, starting early and staying organized are critical to a successful search. For more tips on conducting an academic job search, see Vick and Heiberger's *The Academic Job Search.*

Two Years Before Your Target Job Start Date

- Finalize dissertation committee.
- Identify upcoming conference dates and make plans to attend.
- Read job listings to see what's out there. A good place to start is the *Chronicle of Higher Education.*
- Explore postdoc options.
- Establish long-term goals and set priorities; discuss plans with your partner or family, if you have one.

Summer, Fifteen Months Before

- Stay on track to finish dissertation by next summer; a Ph.D. in hand is safer on the job market.
- Talk to your adviser and other faculty about going on the market. Seek their advice and review potential contacts.
- Continue setting priorities and communicating with your partner/family members.
- Gather letters of recommendation.
- Prepare your CV and other materials (abstract, teaching and research statement, etc.).
- Submit papers for academic conferences.
- Obtain and prepare postdoc applications.

Fall, One Year Before

- Finalize your CV.
- Secure all letters of recommendation.
- Keep working on dissertation!
- Attend Career Services Center programs on academic job search and interview preparation.
- Practice interviewing.
- Read all job listings in your field.
- Write cover letters and send applications.
- Keep in close touch with advisor.
- Consider making direct inquiries to departments of particular interest.

Winter, Eight Months Before

- Continue practicing interviewing.
- Attend academic conferences.
- Prepare and practice job talks.
- Continue to monitor job listings; apply to those that are a good fit.
- Go on campus interviews or telephone interviews.
- Apply for non-academic positions, if interested.
- Be good to yourself. Take some breaks!

Spring, Five-to-Six Months Before

- Receive offers. Remember, it is not official until you have it in writing!
- Negotiate.
- Revisit "Plan B" and "Plan C" if necessary. Remember, non-academic positions are open year round. Many people conduct more than one academic search, so consider on-campus options – teaching, grants, etc. – to get you through another year until next fall's round of academic openings.
- Thank everyone who helped you after you accept a job offer.

Additional Resources:

Tomorrow's Professor: Preparing for Academic Careers in Science and Engineering, by Richard M. Reis (IEEE Press, 1997) is an extremely thorough guide that offers good advice from the first years of graduate study up through successfully completing the tenure process. It's enlivened by case studies. Reis also runs an e-mail discussion group that touches on a variety of issues related to faculty development (See page 8).

The Academic Job Search Handbook (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2001) is a start-to-finish guide to finding a faculty job, but plenty of other good options are out there.

Also check out the AcademicJobSearch mini wiki at The Wikia Scratchpad (a place to share information about the academic job search on a national and even international basis).

Jensen, David G. 2009. *Tooling up: The cold, hard truth about finding a job in 2009.* http://sciencecareers.sciencemag.org/career_magazine/previous_issues/articles/2009_02_20/caredit.a0900025

ON THE PATH TO BECOMING A PROFESSOR: IS A POSTDOC FELLOWSHIP IN YOUR FUTURE?

A POSTDOCTORAL SCHOLAR is an individual who holds a doctorate and has accepted a temporary "training opportunity" to gain additional research experience to further prepare him or her to pursue a career in academe, industry, government or the non-profit sector (National Postdoctoral Association, 2009).

For many Ph.D.s in the sciences, the postdoc is a career stage, wedged between a graduate research assistantship and a tenure track assistant professorship. Increasingly, however, postdoctoral fellowships also may be found in the humanities and social sciences. And, while the majority of postdocs engage in focused research activities, a limited number of "teaching postdocs" are available for those individuals looking to land a position at teaching-oriented institutions.

Typically, postdoctoral scholars work under the guidance and supervision of a faculty mentor, are appointed for a temporary and limited period of time (six months to five years), and are expected to build a research program. In fact, most postdoctoral scholars are hired by principal investigators (PIs) to work directly on grant-supported research.

However, recent initiatives by the National Science Foundation and the National Institutes of Health call for broader professional development opportunities to help young professionals develop the skills needed to advance their careers. In addition to building a research program and acquiring expanded research expertise, NSF and the National Postdoctoral Association, suggest postdocs need to learn how to write grant proposals, manage people, develop research topics, strengthen communication skills and develop other abilities that will help them in academic, government, industry, or other career paths (Post-doctoral Appointments: Policies and Practices, 2004).

If a postdoc position is in your future, what can you do now to prepare for it? Here are some tips from the American Society for Biochemistry and Molecular Biology:

- Do great science as a graduate student. Publish your work in visible journals. Co-author and submit publications with your graduate mentor before moving on. Become known in your department/ institution as a graduate student.
- Take every opportunity you can to speak about your work at your own institution.

- Seek out opportunities to interact with other grad students/postdocs/faculty in the department (for example, start a journal club focused on your research area of interest).
- Become known in your field as a graduate student. Attend meetings – be brave and talk to PIs (particularly those with whom you might be interested in doing a postdoc). Attend small conferences where it's easier to meet and interact with people. Present your work as a poster at regional, national and international meetings. Try to meet with/have a meal with scientists who are visiting your department to give a talk, particularly those in your field.
- Make the most out of interactions with your supervisory committee. Look at each committee meeting not as an administrative hoop to jump through, but as an opportunity to get good advice from your members and to show them why your research–and you–are so great. Set up meetings with your committee members between the required meetings as appropriate; build a relationship over time. Doing this will help you secure good recommendation letters that are based in a real understanding of you and your work.
- Get teaching experience, particularly if you're interested in landing a teaching position. Whether or not you find yourself in a position that requires a lot of teaching in the future, being a good teacher will help you become better at presenting your own data, mentoring undergraduate and graduate students, interviewing for jobs, convincing agencies to fund you, etc.

UNL recently established an Office of Postdoctoral Studies, which serves as a centralized professional and career development resource for postdoctoral scholars at UNL. The OPS provides information, resources, and networking opportunities to enhance the postdoctoral experience. To learn more, checkout the National Postdoctoral Association site. For a listing of current postdoc opportunities, see a list of science careers from the journal *Science*.

Sources:

Committee on Science Engineering and Public Policy (COSEPUP) 2000. *Enhancing the postdoctoral experience for scientists and engineers*. Washington DC: National Academy Press.

Guinnee, M. 2006. *Postdoctoral teaching: Savvy career move or distraction from research?* Available online at Science Careers sciencecareers.sciencemag.org/career_development/previous_issues/articles/2006_05_12/postdoctoral_teaching_savvy_career_move_or_distraction_from_research/

Becoming a postdoc. American Society for Biochemistry and Molecular Biology www.faseb.org/asbmb/epd/Postdoc.html

Vick, Julia Miller and Furlong, Jennifer S. 2007. Applying for a postdoctoral fellowship. *The Chronicle of Higher Education*. Available online at chronicle.com/jobs/news/2007/12/2007121201c.htm.

National Science Foundation. *Postdoctoral Appointments: Policies and Practices Report on a Workshop, November 15 - 17, 2004.* Available online at www.merrimackllc.com/2004/postdocworkshop.html.

MISSION CONTROL: LAUNCHING YOUR CAREER

HOUSTON, WE HAVE A FELLOWSHIP – and a grant – and a full-time faculty position. And *Interfolio* is one way for you to apply to all of them.

Interfolio is an online academic career portfolio management service for graduate students, specifically designed to help you reach the next step in your career path. It provides state-of-the-art tools that make it painless for you to apply instantly to any career opportunity.

Interfolio gives you complete control collecting letters of recommendation and other important credentials; you can easily manage them online and securely deliver them to any destination, for any academic or professional opportunity.

An *Interfolio* portfolio can help you communicate your qualifications and expertise, meet all of your application requirements and get the positions you want. You say exactly when and how to deliver your credentials – electronically, on paper, or even "I-need-to-hit-this-deadline-I-just-found-out-about-yesterday" overnight express delivery – and have the peace of mind knowing that *Interfolio* will take care of you and help you pursue every professional opportunity that comes your way.

For more information, check out Interfolio online.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT SERVICES AVAILABLE FROM THE OFFICE OF GRADUATE STUDIES

Fall campus-wide workshop 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

Funding Opportunities

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

EXTERNAL FELLOWSHIPS

THE GRADUATE STUDIES WEB SITE features a list of external funding opportunities for graduate education. You also can find useful information from the University of Massachusetts Amherst Graduate School to help you search for funding and develop the materials you need for the application process:

- Databases (Community of Science-COS, and the Illinois Researcher Information Service-IRIS) as well as information about accessing the databases
- Links to other university database collections
- Links to major funding resources

This site also offer a number of useful tip sheets, including:

- How to begin your search for funding
- Application process overview
- Common attributes of a fellowship application
- Proposal writing links
- Proposal review guidelines
- Curriculum vitae tips
- Tips for applications for dissertation writing fellowships and grants

UMASS Amherst also has given us permission to provide a link to the GrantSpace blog that features tips on searching and applying for external funding, reminders about approaching deadlines, Q&A, and more. Go to http://blogs.umass.edu/gsgs/

If you need assistance, please contact Jane Schneider at jschneid@unlnotes.unl.edu or 402-472-8670.

BLACK HILLS CORPORATION–ENERGY SCIENCES FELLOWSHIP

THE NEBRASKA CENTER FOR ENERGY SCIENCES RESEARCH is accepting applications for the Black Hills Corporation–Energy Sciences Fellowship for UNL graduate students who have the potential for making an impact in the energy sciences (including all science and engineering disciplines, economics, policy and architecture) through their graduate research projects and coursework to fulfill requirements for either an M.S. or Ph.D.

Deadline: 5/29/09

Amount: $2500

http://ncesr.unl.edu/rfps/BHC_fellowship.php

NATIONAL RESOURCE CENTER FOR THE FIRST-YEAR EXPERIENCE AND STUDENTS IN TRANSITION PAUL P. FIDLER RESEARCH GRANT

THE COMPETITION IS OPEN to faculty, staff and graduate students who plan to conduct research on issues of college student transitions. Cross-institutional research teams are encouraged to apply.

Deadline: 7/1/09

Award amount: $5000 stipend and travel to the 2009 and 2010 conferences

www.sc.edu/fye/research/grant/proposal/

AMERICAN EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH ASSOCIATION DISSERTATION GRANTS

AERA INVITES EDUCATION POLICY- AND PRACTICE-RELATED dissertation proposals using NCES, NSF, and other national databases. Dissertation grants are available for advanced doctoral students and are intended to support students while they write the doctoral dissertation. Applications are encouraged from a variety of disciplines, such as (but not limited to) education, sociology, economics, psychology, demography, statistics and psychometrics.

Deadline: 9/1/2009, to be reviewed in October

Award amounts: up to $20,000 for one-year projects.
www.aera.net/grantsprogram/res_training/diss_grants/DGFly.html

WOMEN'S RESEARCH AND EDUCATION INSTITUTE

THE WREI AWARDS ANNUAL FELLOWSHIPS to a select number of graduate students with a proven commitment to equity for women. WREI fellows gain practical policymaking experience and graduate credit as they work from January to August as congressional legislative aides in Washington, D.C. Fellows receive stipends for tuition and living expenses.

Fellows are selected on the basis of academic competence as well as their demonstrated interest in the public policy process. They are expected to be articulate, adaptable and to have strong writing skills. Only students who are currently in, or have recently completed, a graduate or professional-degree program at an accredited institution in the United States are eligible.

Deadline: 5/22/09

Award amount: stipend of $1500 per month (plus $500 for purchase of health insurance); maximum of $1500 for tuition reimbursement (up to 3 credit hours per semester). Fellows are responsible for transportation to and from Washington and for finding their own living arrangements.

www.wrei.org/

THE CENTER FOR CRAFT, CREATIVITY & DESIGN, CRAFT RESEARCH FUND

GRANTS SUPPORT RESEARCH for a thesis or dissertation relating to United States craft by students enrolled in graduate programs in any accredited college or university. No capital equipment purchases are eligible for support. Travel expenses may be included if justified by the research.

Deadline: 7/1/09

Award amount: $10,000

www.craftcreativitydesign.org/

W. E. UPJOHN INSTITUTE FOR EMPLOYMENT RESEARCH DISSERTATION AWARD

THE W. E. UPJOHN INSTITUTE for Employment Research invites submissions for its annual prize for the best Ph.D. dissertation on employment-related issues. The institute supports and conducts policy-relevant research on employment, unemployment and social insurance programs. The dissertation award further pursues this mission. The dissertation may come from any academic discipline, but it must have a substantial policy thrust.

Deadline: 7/6/09

Award amount: $2000 first prize; up to two honorable mention prizes of $750

www.upjohninst.org/dissert.html

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.*

Events

Campus activities and other events of interest to graduate students

2009 RESEARCH FAIR AND GRADUATE STUDENT POSTER COMPETITION, APRIL 14-16

THE OFFICE OF RESEARCH invites you to attend the 2009 UNL Research Fair, a three-day event featuring collaboration, creativity, innovation and celebration of achievements. Whether you are a member of the faculty, an undergraduate or a graduate student, you will find opportunities to network with officers from federal agencies and engage colleagues in your current research work and ideas for the future.

Fair dates are April 14, 15 and 16 at the City Campus Union. More information is available at http://researchfair.unl.edu/. The schedule will be updated as the Fair dates draw near, so be sure to check periodically for new information. The 2009 Research Fair is free and open to the public.

SUMMER INSTITUTE FOR INTERNATIONAL TEACHING ASSISTANTS: JULY 27-AUGUST 7

INTERNATIONAL GRADUATE STUDENTS AT UNL who expect to receive instructional assignments and whose native language is not English must successfully complete the Institute for International Teaching Assistants (ITAs). The Institute, established in summer 1988, is a multi-purpose program designed to prepare international graduate students from various university departments to teach American undergraduates.

Objectives of the program are to help ITAs develop an understanding of the teaching role in American university classrooms, provide intensive training in English pronunciation and intonation, create opportunities to practice classroom communication skills and instructional strategies, and help ITAs during their first semester teaching with follow-up observations.

Prospective graduate teaching assistants who do not speak English as a native language and who are not graduates of a U.S. college or university must successfully complete the Institute and demonstrate before a panel of faculty and undergraduate students their ability to comprehend and convey the information necessary to be an effective teacher (unless granted a waiver from the Institute) *before* they can be appointed as graduate teaching assistants.

The Summer 2009 ITA Institute runs from July 27 through August 7, 2009, with final panels scheduled Monday, August 10 and Tuesday, August 11.

Find more information about the ITA Institute on the Graduate Studies Web site.

SPEAK TEST DATES, JUNE 4 AND JULY 6

TO BE ELIGIBLE TO PARTICPATE in the institute for international teaching assistants, students must score 26 or higher on the speaking section of the iBT TOEFL or 45 or higher on the TSE or SPEAK Test.

International graduate students **with a score of 26 or higher** on the speaking section of the iBT TOEFL are **not required** to take the SPEAK Test and **are eligible to enroll** in the Institute for International Teaching Assistants.

International graduate students **with a score of 25 or lower** on the speaking section of the iBT TOEFL **must take** the SPEAK Test and **receive a score of 45** or higher to **be eligible to enroll** in the Institute for International Teaching Assistants.

To register for the SPEAK test, go to Nebraska Hall, room E513. The registration fee is $40.00. Sample test materials are available online at www.unl.edu/piesl/testing.shtml.

Scheduled test dates and times are Thursday, June 4, at 3:30 p.m. and Monday, July 6, at 3:30 p.m.

19TH ANNUAL FALL CAMPUS-WIDE WORKSHOP FOR TEACHING ASSISTANTS TO BE OFFERED AUGUST 18

THE FALL CAMPUS-WIDE WORKSHOP for graduate teaching assistants, sponsored by the Office of Graduate Studies, are scheduled for August 19. This year we're pleased to have as our keynote speaker Dr. Chris Sorenson, Distinguished Professor of Physics at Kansas State University.

Both new and experienced graduate teaching assistants will find skills sessions planned especially for their instructional and professional development, with disciplinary breakout sessions designed to encourage small group discussions around specific teaching tasks.

Participants who pre-register will receive an "I Teach for Nebraska" tee-shirt, an eco-friendly water bottle, a set of two whiteboard markers, and more!

All attendees will be eligible for door prizes including a top-selling book on teaching, a digital voice recorder, an external hard drive, a $50 gift card from the UNL Bookstore, or – the grand prize – an iPOD Touch.

The daylong workshop features a free lunch, too, so be sure to pre-register! The preliminary schedule, session descriptions and online pre-registration form are available on the Graduate Studies Web site.

About the Keynote Speaker. . .

The world of physics fascinates Dr. Christopher Sorensen, University Distinguished Professor of physics and chemistry at Kansas State University. And so does student learning.

Named Outstanding Doctoral and Research Universities Professor of the Year in 2007 by the CASE/Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, Dr. Sorensen was described by one student as deeply devoted to his craft: teaching physics. He has both a passion for his field and for his students. Over the course of his faculty career, Sorensen has created, developed and taught undergraduate courses for Kansas State's physics department, where he makes "physics come alive." He also created and teaches a summer experimental science and engineering workshop for teenage girls and supervises high school student research.

Dr. Sorensen has been recognized for his many teaching accomplishments. Besides being named U.S. Professor of the Year, he's received a Stamey Teaching Award (twice), the Commerce Bank Undergraduate Teaching Award, the Presidential Award for Outstanding Undergraduate Teaching and the Commerce Bank Distinguished Graduate Faculty Member Award.

His research focuses on light scattering, optics, water and aqueous solutions, phase transitions and critical phenomena, metastable liquids, nanoscale particles, combustion physics and aerosol physics. He has received numerous research grants, published more than 230 professional publications and holds six patents. He has received the David Sinclair Award of the American Association for Aerosol Research and, in 2008, he won a Higuchi-KU Endowment Research Achievement Award. Sorensen is a member of many professional societies, including the American Physical Society, the American Chemical Society and the American Association for the Advancement of Science.

Dr. Sorensen is a native of Omaha, Nebraska, and received a bachelor's degree in physics at the University of Nebraska–Lincoln. He received both his master's and doctorate degrees in physics from the University of Colorado.

We're excited to welcome him "home" as this year's keynote speaker at the Campus-wide Workshop for Graduate Teaching Assistants on Aug. 18!

Announcements

News of note for graduate students

LAST DAY TO WITHDRAW FROM ONE OR MORE COURSES FOR SPRING IS APRIL 10

ANY WITHDRAWAL FROM CLASSES after April 10, 2009, must be for extraordinary circumstances and permission to withdraw will be granted only by petition through the Office of Graduate Studies. If the late withdrawal is granted, the student will receive a grade of "W" on the transcript for the respective course(s). If the petition is denied, the grade submitted by the instructor will be posted to the transcript. A failing grade is not a reason for a late withdrawal and will not be accepted. One possibility may be to discuss an incomplete or a grade of "I" with your instructor.

If you wish to request a late withdrawal, the following reasons may be considered and documentation for those reasons will be required:

If you wish to withdraw because of:	**You must provide:**
Serious medical conditions	a doctor's statement
Death in the immediate family	a copy of death certificate or remembrance of the service
Sudden and unexpected change of employment duties or hours	employer's statement
Complete absence from all courses for the term without having withdrawn in WAM	statements from all course instructors verifying you have not attended
Instructor's approval	an e-mail or signature on the withdrawal form

If you have questions about this process, please contact Jane Schneider at 472-8670 or jschneid@unlnotes.unl.edu.

REFWORKS WORKSHOPS APRIL 9 AND 27

MANAGE CITATIONS FOR YOUR PAPERS using RefWorks to help you create bibliographies; automatically format your citations or references in MLA, APA, and other styles; organize and manage your citations; and import citations from Academic Search Premier, ERIC, Agricola, PsycINFO, and other databases. RefWorks also allows you to share references with groups and classmates and uses the Write-N-Cite utility to pull citations into your paper as you type.

Upcoming RefWorks workshops will be held Thurs., April 9, 3-4:30 p.m. and again on Wed., April 22, 3-4:30 p.m. in Love Library South room 111.

There is no charge to attend. Contact Brian Keiser (bkeiser2@unl.edu or 472-3411) to sign up.

It has always seemed strange to me that in our endless discussions about education so little stress is laid on the pleasure of becoming an educated person, the enormous interest it adds to life. To be able to be caught up into the world of thought – that is to be educated.

– Edith Hamilton, American educator, author and classicist.

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/degrees.

DATE	MASTER'S DEGREES	DOCTORAL DEGREES
	To Be Conferred May 2009	*To Be Conferred May 2009*
April 22	Incomplete grades must be removed; File results of written comprehensive exam and/or option II paper	
April 23	Final day for oral examination	Final day for oral examination
April 24	Deposit thesis and final examination report form; pay binding fee	Dissertation deposit; dissertation grades; final fees; final forms
May 8	Commencement	Doctoral hooding and commencement ceremony
	To Be Conferred August 2009	*To Be Conferred August 2009*
June 10	Application for degree	Application for degree
July 9	Final examination report	Application for final oral examination or waiver
July 18	Incomplete grades removed	
July 23	Preliminary copy of thesis & written comprehensive exams	
July 30	Oral examination	Oral examination
July 31	Thesis deposit; final examination report form; payment of binding fee	Dissertation deposit; dissertation grades; final fees; final forms
Aug. 14	Commencement	Doctoral hooding ceremony and commencement

Interactions

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

GRADUATE STUDENT ASSOCIATION NEWS

THE GRADUATE STUDENT ASSOCIATION has elected new executive committee members for the 2009-2010 academic year.

Executive Chair: Avery Paulson (Veterinary and Biomedical Sciences)
Vice Chair of Public Relations: Laura Lynch (Mathematics)
Vice Chair of Finance: Shannon Cummins (Marketing)
Vice Chair of External Affairs: Tareq Daher (Educational Studies)
Vice Chair of Internal Affairs: Candace Berman (Music)
Vice Chair of Legislative Affairs: Eric Hunt (School of Natural Resources)
Vice Chair of Information: Sharon Zumbrunn (Educational Psychology)

Seeking GSA LA Representatives for 2009/2010.
As we prepare for next fall, the GSA would like to identify representatives from each department by May. If you are a representative and will be relinquishing your position, please alert your department so a replacement can be found. If there will be a new representative for your department, both the outgoing and incoming representatives are asked to send an e-mail to gsa@unl.edu so we can update our listserv.

Survey.
The GSA recently distributed a survey asking questions about your graduate school experience and satisfaction with policies that affect graduate students. The information gathered in the survey has not yet been processed, but we are optimistic that the data collected will allow us to more effectively advocate on your behalf.

Graduate Student Appreciation Week.
April 6-10 is Graduate Student Appreciation Week. Plan to attend as many of these events as possible.

Monday, 4/6, noon– East Campus Free BBQ, East Campus Union Lawn

Tuesday, 4/7, 7 p.m. – Free Bowling at East Campus

Wednesday, 4/8, 7 p.m. – New Faculty Panel: Advice for Future Faculty, City Campus Union

Awards for graduate student and faculty member of the year will be presented at this time. Light refreshments (cookies, coffee, tea) will be served.

Thursday, 4/9, 6 p.m. – Trivia Night at Buzzard Billy's.

The first 50 graduate students who can prove their graduate status (e.g., awful adviser e-mail, program of studies, 6-inch thesis folder, etc.) will receive a free appetizer coupon.

Friday, 4/10, 2-5 p.m. – Free Massages at the City Campus Rec Center

Friday, 4/10, 5 p.m. – 2nd Annual Faculty vs. Graduate Student Kickball Tournament, Vine Street Fields

Friday, 4/10 – Celebration at downtown BW3's following tournament.

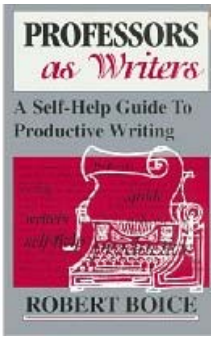
For more information about UNL's Graduate Student Association, go to http://www.unl.edu/gsa/.

Readers' Corner

Interesting reading for graduate students

PROFESSORS AS WRITERS

By Robert Boice



Robert Boice's *Professors as Writers* provides an easy to follow and comprehensive look at overcoming writing problems and strategies for being a productive writer. With a multitude of academic writing books dedicated more to the pressures of publishing than to the writing process, Boice set out to create a manual based on his two decades of researching professors as writers.

This helpful manual is divided into four sections that focus on writing problems, strategies for the short run and long run, as well as solutions for growth. The self-evaluation for assessing writing problems and the structure of the manual allow writers to first identify the problems in their writing process and then correct these problems with effective strategies.

While Boice's manual is written with professors in mind, graduate students can gain valuable insight into the academic writing process from *Professors as Writers*.

Read more at New Forums Press.