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Graduate Connections



University of Nebraska–Lincoln

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

February 2012

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Navigating Graduate School

Advice and strategies to help you succeed in Graduate School at UNL

OPPORTUNITIES TO BE PROFESSIONALLY MENTORED

THERE ARE MANY DIFFERENCES between being an undergraduate and a graduate student. Often graduate students say they're surprised by how much more they read and the time they spend preparing for class. Other students relish the new found academic independence. But perhaps one of the biggest changes you will experience as a graduate student is how you interact with your mentor. As an undergraduate, your mentor may have filled more of an advisor function, helping you determine which courses would be best for your academic interests while helping you graduate on time or giving you advice on preparing your applications for graduate school. As a graduate student, your relationship with your mentor is much more involved.

To help you navigate your relationship with your faculty mentor, we've given advice about [seeking and selecting mentors](#) and [building mentoring relationships that last](#), as well as information about the [benefits of peer mentoring](#). The Office of Graduate Studies also provides a [mentoring guidebook](#) to help graduate students better understand the student and mentor relationship.

While faculty mentors play an important role in providing guidance for your educational, professional, and personal growth, some students seek additional mentoring outside of academia to enhance their graduate school experience. [The Cather Circle](#) is one example of how students expand their experiences being mentored. The Cather Circle, created in 1999 by the Alumni Association, connects female UNL graduate and undergraduate students with alumnae who pursued a variety of careers. Sylvia Jons, masters student in educational administration, is one of the graduate students who takes advantage of opportunities through the Cather

Circle. She works with a mentor from the FBI. The pairing of an educational administration student and a member of the FBI may not seem like the most natural choice, but Sylvia finds that the relationship works well for her: “My mentor through the Cather Circle was the first woman to achieve a top position in her specialty, and I want to move up through the ranks of educational administration in higher education, a predominately male field. Her guidance and advice is not just valuable during my graduate education; as I begin my professional career, it will help me to have the support of a woman who knows what it’s like to navigate a male-dominated field.”

The Cather Circle holds annual meetings where students are paired with an alumna mentor from across the country. The relationships built through the Cather Circle often carry on after the mentee has graduated and provide more than just professional support, says Jons. “I’m grateful for my faculty mentor and the other students in my program, but I’m also glad to have someone who is outside UNL to talk to, especially when I’ve had a rough week. My mentor doesn’t always give advice, sometimes she just listens.”

Faculty mentor relationships are important to your success as a graduate student, and opportunities to work with mentors outside academia are also beneficial for many reasons: They can help you see your program and job search from a different perspective, help you learn to navigate the private sector if you choose to pursue a profession outside of academia, and provide additional support throughout your program. Alumni from your program and professionals in your industry are both excellent sources for finding a mentor. If you’re interested in working with a professional mentor, work with your faculty advisor to identify an appropriate mentor among alumni or members of the community.

FIVE REASONS TO ATTEND THE 2012 RESEARCH FAIR

THE ANNUAL RESEARCH FAIR is one way UNL celebrates graduate student research on our campus. For ten years, graduate students have participated in the poster session and other events throughout the research fair. Here are our top five reasons why you should attend on April 4:

1. **Network with faculty and other graduate students.** The time between (and during!) workshops is ideal for getting to know faculty and other graduate students from across campus.
2. **Attend the morning workshop.** Dr. Rique Campa, Associate Dean of the Graduate School and Professor of Fisheries and Wildlife at Michigan State University, will be presenting *Be Nimble: Building Transferable Skills for Career Success in Academic and Non-academic Positions*, for graduate students. Regardless of where you are in your program, it’s never too early to think about how your graduate school experience will give you a leg up in the job market (9:00–11:00 a.m.).
3. **Find out more about graduate curriculum.** Dr. Campa will present *Graduate Education and Career & Professional Development Opportunities: Building Partnerships for the Future*, for faculty, postdocs, and graduate students during lunch (11:30 a.m.–1:15 p.m.).

How’s Your Connection?

You can read the current and all past editions of **Graduate Connections** at:

<http://go.unl.edu/gradconnect>

We invite your feedback and comments about **Graduate Connections**. Can you use the kinds of information you find in this issue? What 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 emails to gsapd2@unl.edu.

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4. Present your research at the poster fair.

Register for the poster session (1:30–3:30 p.m.) and take advantage of an opportunity to showcase your research for faculty, students, and staff from across campus.

5. Learn more about scholarship on campus.

Enhance interdisciplinary connections in your

work by learning about other scholars' research.

For more information about the [Research Fair](#), please visit the [announcements](#) section of this newsletter.

LOOKING FOR SOMETHING?

Every issue of Graduate Connections contains articles, tips, and advice to help you navigate graduate school, writing, academic integrity, and your professional development. Have you ever read an article that you wanted to save for later but couldn't find it when you needed it? Use the search bar in the upper right hand corner of the

[Graduate Studies web site](#) to find articles from our archives. If you're looking for articles about writing a CV, just type 'curriculum vitae' in the search box. The results will include articles from our Graduate Connections archives and resources available on our web site.

Good Practices in Graduate Education

Advice and strategies to strengthen ethics in graduate education

THE CONSEQUENCES OF ACADEMIC DISHONESTY

IN SEPTEMBER 2011, Diderik Stapel, a Dutch social psychologist, was suspended by Tilburg University pending an investigation of allegations that he was using fraudulent data sets. Over the next few months, it became clear that much of the data Stapel used in his own research and shared with colleagues since 2004 were fabricated. How to maintain integrity is an often discussed topic in academics; however, the impact of academic dishonesty can be difficult to wrap your mind around in hypothetical situations. Stapel's case is an opportunity to reflect on how academic dishonesty affects the researcher who committed the infraction, colleagues who were given and used fake data sets, and the field in which the dishonesty occurred.

In his article *The Fraud Who Fooled (Almost) Everyone*, Tom Bartlett breaks down Stapel's methods in order to understand how he managed to commit such bold fraudulent acts for so many years. Bartlett discusses Stapel's ability to chat with colleagues about current projects and then produce a data set that would be perfect for the project. Typically, this data set would be one that Stapel himself never had a chance to use and was happy to turn over to his colleague. Stapel would

then be named as co-author on any publications related to the data set.

Stapel successfully created cover stories and vague yet convincing reasons to explain away questions about his data. When colleagues wanted to contact schools where research took place, Stapel requested he be the only contact so that the schools wouldn't be flooded with questions from researchers.

Graduate students took part in intense preparation for studies that were conducted solely by Stapel in schools where he claimed to have connections. His colleagues were not aware that graduate students did not take part in data collection. Stapel used just enough true information about curricula and school locations to make scenarios believable, but the names of research assistants and data were all falsified.

Possibly the most important detail in how Stapel managed to continue his use of fake data for so long is that he alone maintained control of his data sets. Stapel encouraged graduate students to focus on analysis and writing rather than maintaining data, arguing those skills were more important for students to learn. Requests for questionnaires were denied with the excuse that storage space was too

limited to retain them and manuscripts often included only vague details about how the data were collected.

As the National Science Foundation (NSF) and National Institutes of Health (NIH) move toward better defined data-sharing requirements for grant-funded projects, it will become more and more difficult for scholars to fabricate and manipulate studies and data so easily. Currently, the NIH requires grants of \$500,000 or more a year to include a data-sharing plan. The NSF will soon require data management plans with all grant proposals. These new requirements are the result of a desire to advance science more quickly and more efficiently fund science; they were not developed in response to concerns about fraudulent research. Regardless, better data-sharing and management requirements will reduce the opportunities to commit academic fraud.

In the middle of the controversy surrounding Stapel's actions are two details that should not be overlooked. Firstly the end to Stapel's career as a social psychologist is not the only consequence of his fraudulent actions. Doctoral dissertations, publications based on his data sets, and studies based on those publications are now being called into question. Stapel provided data for studies that changed his field. One fake data set can create a ripple effect. It may be years before researchers can untangle the false data from accurate data. The

discovery of fraudulent data doesn't just change Stapel's career; it affects the career of the colleagues and graduate students who trusted Stapel, just like they trusted other researchers to provide true data sets.

Secondly although faculty sometimes questioned Stapel's data, it was a group of graduate students who noticed inconsistencies across Stapel's publications and reported the inconsistencies to the head of the department, bringing an end to Stapel's dishonesty. Graduate students are not just the next generation of researchers. Graduate students make real and lasting contributions to their fields. Sometimes the change comes from research and sometimes it comes from being brave enough to do the right thing and call attention to academic misconduct.

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LeClere, F.B. (2011). Cure for scientific misconduct. *Inside Higher Ed*. Retrieved January 17, 2012, from <http://www.insidehighered.com/views/2011/12/08/essay-ways-prevent-scientific-misconduct>.

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Professional Development Network

Tips and strategies to give graduate students a leg up in launching a professional career

EXPANDING THE DOCTORAL JOB SEARCH

YOU'VE SPENT THE last several years working toward your goal: the PhD. Now that you have the degree in hand, you may be curious about career options beyond academe.

Why look for a post-academic career? Perhaps you have a spouse or partner to consider; maybe you want to stay in one part of the country; possibly you have discovered that parts of university work excite you, while other aspects of your job as a graduate student (and future faculty member) aren't as fulfilling as you would like. Whatever your reasons for widening your search, there's

some great news: your degree makes you uniquely qualified for work beyond the university's walls. Take the time to explore those future careers now to make your transition to the post-academic world easier.

With just a bit of work (and the help of a few tools), doctoral students can identify and pursue a myriad of careers—the equivalent of discovering infrared and ultraviolet light at both ends of the spectrum. They may be invisible to the naked eye, but with a bit of searching, potential is unearthed.

Preparing for the Job Search

So how do you begin that search? In “*So What are You Going to Do With That?*” *A Guide to Career-Changing for M.A.’s and Ph.D.’s*, Susan Basalla and Maggie Debelius, two PhD recipients from Princeton University, outline the job search for the post-academic crowd. To discover your interests and possible fields of employment (as well as your marketable skills), they suggest taking inventory of what you love and hate about academia. Pick a few of the “loves” to focus on (examples might include intellectual engagement, mentoring students, or working in archives), and ask yourself how these might transfer to the work world.

Another exercise: to give yourself an idea of your various marketable skills, list all of the activities you engage in when completing scholarly work. Narrow the list to the three or four things that interest you most, and add the various tasks that go along with each activity. Then write the skills associated with each task. An example of such a list:

Activity: Running lab experiments on mouse genetics

Tasks: Supervising lab assistants, designing experiments, recording and analyzing results, tracking data, ordering and operating lab equipment

Skills: Management, long-term planning, attention to detail, computer modeling, complex problem solving, analytical skills (see Chapter 2 of “*So What are You Going to do With That?*” for additional helpful exercises)

Beginning the Job Search: Informational Interviews

Sharon Milgram, Director of the [Office of Intramural Training and Education at the National Institutes of Health](#), spoke recently at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln about post-academic employment opportunities for doctoral candidates and postdocs. She encouraged postdocs to be proactive in their job search by conducting informational interviews to network during the job search.

Take charge of your job search by contacting anyone who might be willing to help: relatives, neighbors, and alumni from your undergraduate

and graduate institutions are a great starting point. Make a list of people who are in fields or who work for companies you are interested in, and schedule an informational interview.

An informational interview provides you with more information from the inside of an organization. An informational interview *is not* a time for you to ask for a job—it’s a chance for you to sit down with experts and ask how they got where they are, what they look for in potential employees, and what sort of work their company does. It’s also an opportunity for you to get feedback on your resume (for more on how to make your CV into a resume, see the resources, below).

Practice your two-minute introduction. You may want to *briefly* (in one or two sentences!) mention what your dissertation topic is about, what your background is, which skills you’ve acquired, and finish with explaining that you wanted to meet with this person because their field/job interests you and you wanted to learn more.

Before you go, research the employer so that you are ready to ask pertinent questions. After all, the informational interview is not about you, but about the person you are interviewing. Some helpful questions include:

- How did you get started in your field?
- What excites you most about your work?
- What’s your average day like?
- What skills are important to have in this field?
- Can you suggest other people I can talk to?

After your informational interview, make sure to send a thank-you note with specific references to your conversation. Remember—only one in five informational interviews may lead to a job tip. The informational interview is not a job interview, but research. Like your academic work, finding a job that fits you and uses your skills takes time and research.

Take heart! You’ll find the right career path for you. Here are a few resources to guide you:

Alternative Careers in Science edited by Cynthia Robbins-Roth

Teaching Tip

SPEED LEARNING

This activity, based on the concept of speed dating, keeps students moving, awake, and engaged; gives them a chance to get familiar with each other's ideas on a text or topic in a short time period; warms them up for more in-depth discussion later in the class; and challenges them to assess, question, analyze, and defend their own opinions.

- Give students several questions to ponder and write about on a particular topic. Or assign each student a specific segment of a course reading, asking them to note 3-5 key points they glean from the reading. (This can be a journaling or warm-up exercise in class or assigned in advance.)
- Arrange lines of tables with chairs on both sides and a chair at one end, no more than 5 to 9 people per table. The more chairs at the table, the longer the activity will take. The odd number ensures that participants will "date" all the others—everyone takes a turn in the idle chair to review notes or organize thoughts before continuing. If a group ends up with an even number, the instructor can participate.
- Each student takes a place facing a partner across the table. When you tell them to go (perhaps by ringing a bell or sounding a horn), each pair will have 3 minutes to discuss or share information. Students should take notes during each discussion.
- After 3 minutes, sound the horn and instruct students to move one chair to their left. Give them 3 minutes to share information with their new partner.
- Continue until students meet up with their original partners.
- Debrief as a class or require students to write an abstract of the information they gathered in the speed learning activity.

Outside the Ivory Tower: A Guide for Academics Considering Alternative Careers by Margaret Newhouse

What Color is Your Parachute? A Practical Manual for Job-Hunters & Career-Changers by Richard Nelson Booles

Adapted from Basalla, S. & Debelius, M. (2001). "So What are You Going to Do With That?" *A Guide to Career-Changing for M.A.'s and PH.D.'s*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux.

LEARNING TO WRITE: WISDOM FROM EMERGING SCHOLARS

Building Good Writing Skills. Good writing is not a talent; it's a skill acquired (or learned) through practice and dedication. On the road to becoming an effective writer, you will learn to give and receive constructive criticism and you will learn how to find time to write. You will also work hard to overcome obstacles, like writer's block, that may prevent you from writing.

Give and Receive Constructive Criticism. Writing is an iterative process with many drafts, reviews, and revisions. Along the way, the feedback you give and receive will strengthen your writing. Peer reviews, both formal and informal, offer opportunities for you to address unclear areas, provide alternative viewpoints, and offer suggestions for improvement. While critique can be intimidating and seem extremely personal, constructive criticism is perhaps the most helpful tool for you to understand the scholarly writing process and produce a scholarly product. Above all, remember that critiques are not personal attacks.

Beyond offering advice about technical issues like grammar and punctuation, peer reviewers provide a thoughtful critique of content and offer insightful examples. Of course, some people are more skilled at providing feedback than others. Remember that just because the reviewer offers feedback does not mean you must act on it. Critically reflect on the reviewer's comments and incorporate feedback into your writing as you see fit. If multiple reviewers offer a similar criticism, however, be prepared to revise your manuscript to aid clarity. If you choose not to incorporate criticism from conference or journal reviewers, be sure to explain your reasoning in the letter to the editor.

Establish your own peer group to review one another's manuscripts: you will improve your own writing and your ability to provide productive feedback.

Find Time to Write. With your teaching obligations, you may have difficulty finding a large block of time to write. Rather than dwelling on the scarcity of time, find pockets of productivity. You can be structured or unstructured with your time. Sometimes the most opportune times are the easiest to overlook, such as using commuting time to write, read, take notes, and edit manuscripts.

Creating a broad or narrow plan for completing writing projects is also an effective tool for staying motivated and focused. To resolve competing priorities, schedule writing time as you would schedule other appointments and meetings. Then honor those commitments to write.

Manage Writer's Block. Writer's block might be the single largest impediment to completing your thesis or dissertation. Learn to manage writer's block now to avoid frustration later. Preparing a scholarly manuscript is somewhat like putting together a jigsaw puzzle. A few pieces might snap into place. However, when your manuscript does not take shape quickly, you may become overwhelmed, frustrated, and blocked. The more you try, the more difficult writing becomes, creating confusion, anxiety, and self-doubt. Here are some helpful ways you can manage writer's block and successfully complete your project.

Set your project aside. You can gain perspective on your manuscript, or a particular problem, by relaxing or changing direction.

Unexpectedly, another piece might snap into place and you can resume writing. You will experience writer's block more than once, but with patience and persistence, you will complete the manuscript.

Take a break. Sometimes we get writer's block because we are burned out or have read too much. Take care of yourself. Stress, exhaustion, and unrealistic expectations can also lead to writer's block. Nourish your mind and body through sleep, exercise, and healthy food.

Still the inner critic. Sometimes the inner critic unleashes writer's block. And other times, we experience writer's block because of perfectionism, low self-confidence, fear of failure, or fear of rejection. Try to silence the

inner critic that criticizes every word or sentence.

Freewrite. Try mind mapping or free writing to still the inner critic and get words on the page. What you write is not as important as that you are writing. Writing just fifteen minutes a day helps you set good habits that often result in breakthroughs and movement toward finishing the manuscript. (See the [Readers' Corner](#).)

Talk about your work. Unblock your thoughts by talking about your ideas. Like freewriting, a conversation may be the best tool to free your thinking. You can make notes or record your conversation for later review and writing.

Express Your Scholarly Voice. The emerging scholar may rely on excessive paraphrase or quotes from other authors. Perhaps attributable to the imposter phenomenon, the scholar reliant on another's voice to make her point does not trust her own voice to join in scholarly conversations. The scholar who has found her voice, on the other hand, demonstrates a solid argument that will add to the knowledge base. Trust yourself—you are capable and worthy of participating in scholarly conversations.

Being scholars means approaching everything with curiosity, continually questioning what we read, making new connections, and looking for gaps in the knowledge base. If what has already been written and published could never be challenged, eventually the scholarly flame would be extinguished.

Reference

Kostopulos Nackoney, C., Munn, S.L. & Fernandez, J. (2011). Learning to write: Wisdom from emerging scholars. In T.S. Rocco & T. Hatcher (Eds.), *The handbook of scholarly writing and publishing* (pp. 26-43). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT SERVICES AVAILABLE FROM THE OFFICE OF GRADUATE STUDIES

Fall Campuswide Workshop for Graduate Teaching Assistants
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

CONCRETE TIPS FOR WRITING ABSTRACTS

AS A GRADUATE STUDENT, you'll quickly become familiar with the informative abstract, an integral component of many of the things you'll write in your academic career—journal articles, research grants, theses and dissertations, or proposals for books and conference papers. An abstract is a self-contained capsule—a short and powerful statement that describes a larger work. It shouldn't force the reader to flip through the rest of the document seeking an explanation of some vague statement. It must make sense all by itself. In addition, while it may contain key words found in the larger work, the abstract is an original document rather than an excerpted passage.

Abstracts allow readers who may be interested in a longer work to quickly decide whether it is worth their time to read it. Also, many online databases use abstracts to index larger works. Therefore, abstracts should contain keywords and phrases that allow for easy searching.

Components of the abstract vary according to discipline, so it is wise to study abstracts of published works in your particular field. However, these are the basic components of an abstract in any discipline:

Reason for writing: What is the importance of the research? Why would a reader be interested in the larger work?

Problem: What problem does this work attempt to solve? What is the scope of the project? What is the main argument/thesis/claim?

Methodology/approach: How did you go about solving the problem? What variables did you control, measure, or ignore? The abstract of a scientific work may include specific models or approaches used in the larger study. Other abstracts may describe the types of evidence used in the research.

Results: What answers did you find? Again, the abstract of a scientific work may include

specific data that indicate the results of the project. Other abstracts may discuss the findings in a more general way.

Implications: What changes should be implemented as a result of the findings of the work? How does this work add to the body of knowledge on the topic?

Occasionally, you may be required to provide a short descriptive abstract that simply identifies the type of information found in the work. The descriptive abstract makes no judgments about the work, nor does it provide results or conclusions of the research. In many ways, the descriptive abstract is like a table of contents in paragraph form. A reader cannot substitute a descriptive abstract for the entire document because it does not capture the content of the piece. Descriptive abstracts are usually very short (100 words or less) and are not generally used in academic and scientific discourse. Check with your instructor or the editor of the journal to which you are submitting a paper for details on the appropriate type of abstract for your audience.

Abstract Hints:

Avoid use of phrases like “in this paper.” (What other paper would you be talking about here?)

Don't include source references in the abstract.

Highlight not only the problem, but also the principal results. Many people read abstracts and then decide whether to read the rest of the paper.

Since the abstract will be used by search engines, be sure to include key terms that identify your work.

Avoid equations and math in the abstract unless your work relates to a mathematical proposal.

The length of an abstract varies according to discipline, and most journals and calls for proposals specify the maximum number of words to include in the abstract.

Funding Opportunities

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

NOTE: UNL's Office of Research and Economic Development sends out weekly announcements of funding opportunities, several of which relate to fellowships in a wide variety of fields of study. You can subscribe to the listserv by sending an email to Nathan Meier at nmeier2@unl.edu. You also can search funding opportunities at research.unl.edu/proposaldevelopment/funding.php.

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 to support advanced doctoral students while they write the dissertation. Applications are encouraged from a variety of disciplines, such as (but not limited to) education, sociology, economics, psychology, demography, statistics, and psychometrics.

Deadline: 3/1/12

Award Amounts: up to \$20,000 for one-year projects

www.aera.net/grantsprogram/res_training/diss_grants/DGFly.html

BERMAN FOUNDATION DISSERTATION FELLOWSHIPS

THE ASSOCIATION FOR JEWISH STUDIES is accepting applications for the Berman Foundation Dissertation Fellowships in support of research in the social scientific study of the contemporary American Jewish community. The fellowships encourage graduate students in sociology, social psychology, social anthropology, demography, contemporary history, social work, political science, geography, and education to expand their

research to include the study of North American Jewry.

Deadline: 3/29/12

Award Amount: \$16,000 (two awards)

www.ajsnet.org/berman.htm

MARGARET W. MOORE AND JOHN M. MOORE RESEARCH FELLOWSHIP

THE MOORE FELLOWSHIP provides a stipend to promote research during the academic year or summer months using the resources of the Friends Historical Library and/or the Swarthmore College Peace Collection.

Deadline: 3/31/12

Award Amount: TBA

<http://www.swarthmore.edu/Library/peace/peacewebsite/scpcWebsite/Documents/MooreFellowship.htm>

DOCTORAL DISSERTATION RESEARCH IMPROVEMENT GRANTS

THESE GRANTS TO DOCTORAL STUDENTS are intended to improve the quality of dissertation research. They provide funds for items not normally available through the student's university. Additionally, these grants allow doctoral students to undertake significant data-gathering projects and to conduct field research in settings away from their campus that would not otherwise be possible.

Application must be submitted by the dissertation adviser on behalf of the graduate student.

Deadline: varies by discipline

Award Amount: depends on availability of funds

<http://www07.grants.gov/search/search.do?&mode=VIEW&oppId=96614>

Announcements

News of note for graduate students

CALL FOR NOMINATIONS: 2012-2013 PREPARING FUTURE FACULTY PROGRAM

NOMINATIONS ARE BEING ACCEPTED until April 5 for the next class of Preparing Future Faculty fellows. To participate in the PFF program, you must be an advanced doctoral student at UNL selected by your department. Contact your department or graduate chair to express interest in PFF and ask to be nominated. Once you've been selected as a fellow, you'll be enrolled in the summer seminars (GRDC 900A, 900B, and 900D) and be matched with a PFF mentor.

PFF is part of the effort of the Office of Graduate Studies to enrich graduate education at UNL by providing doctoral students with opportunities to observe and experience faculty responsibilities at a variety of academic institutions with varying missions, diverse student bodies, and different expectations for faculty.

The first part of the program is a five-week, on-campus summer seminar. The second part takes place over the fall semester, when students make two to four visits to a partner campus in the Lincoln-Omaha area and participate in various mentoring activities. Fellows may opt for a spring mentoring activity at a second campus.

Participating PFF fellows are paired with faculty mentors at partner institutions. After an initial

consultation in the fall, fellows and their mentors construct an individual program of activities designed to develop teaching competence, knowledge of the academic profession, and an understanding of the partner institution's academic culture. Many PFF students find the mentorship experience to be the most helpful and rewarding aspect of the program, and they often maintain lasting professional relationships with their PFF mentors.

UNL Preparing Future Faculty alumni can be found teaching at Vassar College, Pepperdine University, Wartburg College, South Dakota State University, Texas State University-San Marcos, University of Nebraska-Kearney, Hillsdale College, Seattle University, St. John's University, Creighton University, the University of Michigan Medical School, California Institute of Technology, the U.S. Naval Research Laboratory (Chemistry Division), and the University of St. Thomas.

For more information on any aspect of PFF, contact Dr. Laurie Bellows in the Office of Graduate Studies at lbellows1@unl.edu or 402-472-9764, or visit the [PFF website](#).

RESPONSIBLE CONDUCT OF RESEARCH TRAINING

To comply with NSF and NIH responsible conduct of research requirements, UNL administers an online RCR course (GRDC 98) through [Blackboard](#). The RCR training covers subjects that apply to all students and postdoctoral researchers, such as mentor and trainee roles, authorship, and collaboration.

It is not meant to replace any existing training but rather to provide individuals engaged in research with the baseline knowledge they need to continue the study and practice of RCR. There is no tuition

associated with GRDC 98. Students required to complete this course are automatically enrolled, but it is available to anyone affiliated with the University of Nebraska. It takes about one hour to complete GRDC 98, and anyone registered for the spring semester should complete the course by Wednesday, April 4, 2012. For more information regarding the RCR training requirement and for step-by-step instructions on how to self-enroll in the course, please visit <http://research.unl.edu/orr/rcr>.

Interactions

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

CIC SMITHSONIAN FELLOWSHIPS AWARDED

THE SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION has selected six students from Universities that belong to the Consortium of Institutional Cooperation for the Predoctoral Fellowship Program for 2012.

Mario Pesendorfer, a doctoral candidate in the School of Biological Sciences mentored by Dr. Al Kamil, has been named as one of the awardees.

The fellowship period is for 9-12 months of research at the Smithsonian with a stipend of \$30,000.

Mr. Pesendorfer's research will involve a study of animal behavior, specifically scatter-hoarding of seeds by selected birds.

CONGRATULATIONS TO 2012 GRADUATE AWARD WINNERS

KUDOS TO SIX GRADUATE students honored at a February 2 reception recognizing their outstanding contributions to teaching and research at UNL.

The Lowe R. & Mavis M. Folsom Distinguished Doctoral Dissertation and Master's Thesis Awards

Funded by a generous gift from the Folsom family to the University of Nebraska Foundation, these awards recognize distinguished research accomplishments of doctoral and master's candidates.

This year's recipient of the Folsom Distinguished Dissertation Award is Maureen Todd, Child, Youth and Family Studies. The Folsom Distinguished Master's Thesis Award recipient is Aprille Phillips, Teaching, Learning and Teacher Education.

Outstanding Graduate Teaching Assistant Award

The Office of Graduate Studies recognizes the valuable role graduate teaching assistants play in enhancing undergraduate education at UNL.

The Outstanding Graduate Teaching Assistant Award honors graduate students who have demonstrated extraordinary effectiveness in advancing the learning of undergraduate students in their charge. The award is given based on the following criteria: demonstrated excellence based on student evaluations of teaching effectiveness, use of innovative teaching

techniques, and engagement in the scholarship of teaching and learning.

This year's recipients are Susan Martens, English, and Tiffany Wang, Communication Studies.

Outstanding Graduate Research Assistant Award

The Outstanding Graduate Research Assistant Award recognizes the extraordinary quality of research and creative activity carried out by UNL graduate students who hold research assistantships. Research mentors nominate selected students; the review criteria include the centrality of the student's on-going contribution to his or her research team, demonstrated promise as a researcher, and the originality and significance of the student's own research or creative activity.

This year's recipients are Inés Martinez, Food, Science and Technology, and Rhitankar Pal, Chemistry.

Dean's Award for Excellence in Graduate Education

The Dean's Award for Excellence in Graduate Education honors faculty members whose dedication to graduate students and commitment to excellence in graduate mentoring have made a significant contribution to graduate education at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln.

This year two faculty members were honored with this award: Xiao Cheng Zeng, professor of Chemistry, and Patrice McMahon, associate professor of Political Science.

Events

Campus activities and other events of interest to graduate students

SPRING 2012 NUGRANT TRAINING SESSIONS

The Office of Research and Economic Development is offering spring training sessions beginning in February. The NUgrant Proposal Routing Module allows users to see information about one project on one site, and the NUgrant IRB module is for faculty, students, and researchers who use human subjects in research and teaching.

For more information and to register, please visit: <http://research.unl.edu/nuramp/nugrant.shtml>.

NUgrant Proposal Routing Module

Dates: Feb. 29, March 20, April 25 and May 30

Time: 1:00–2:30 p.m.

Location: 201 Alexander West

NUgrant IRB Module

Dates: Feb. 29, March 20, April 25 and May 30

Time: 2:30–3:30 p.m.

Location: 201 Alexander West

FULBRIGHT INFORMATION SESSIONS

Learn about the Fulbright grants for graduate students to study abroad.

Tuesday, March 6, 6:30–7:30 p.m. in the Nebraska Union on City Campus Heritage room

Wednesday, March 14, 5:30–6:30 p.m. in the Nebraska Union on City Campus Regency Suite

The presentation will last for about a half an hour. Students are welcome to stay and ask questions.

The sessions are being held by Dr. Laura Damuth, UNL Fulbright Program Advisor. If you need further information, contact Dr. Damuth at ldamuth1@unl.edu.

2012 RESEARCH FAIR AND GRADUATE STUDENT POSTER SESSION

THE OFFICE OF RESEARCH & Economic Development invites you to attend the 2012 UNL Research Fair, running April 4-5, 2012.

Celebrate graduate student education by attending workshops on transferable skills and developing career and professional development awareness, and the poster session in the afternoon.

The Graduate Student Poster Session will take place on Wednesday, April 4, from 1:30 to 3:30 p.m. in the Centennial Room at the Nebraska Union. All graduate disciplines are welcome to participate and all presenters will receive a certificate of participation at the conclusion of the event.

The Graduate Student Poster Session is a great opportunity for graduate students to showcase

their research or creative activity; to communicate their results to other students, faculty, and staff; and to learn about other areas of research and creative activity. If you don't intend to present a poster, please plan to attend for light refreshments and engaging conversations with your peers about their research.

The deadline to submit a poster is March 16. More details about the poster session are available on the [Research Fair website](#). The schedule will be updated as the fair dates draw near, so be sure to check periodically for new information. Questions may be directed to Justina Clark at 402-472-2869 or jclark17@unl.edu.

The 2012 Research Fair is free and open to the public.

LAB SAFETY COLLOQUIUM, APRIL 18

THE NEXT LABORATORY SAFETY INITIATIVE colloquium, “Safe Handling: Unstable, Reactive & Energetic Chemicals,” will be offered April 18 on both of UNL’s campuses.

East Campus

East Campus Union, 12:30–1:30 p.m.

City Campus

102 Hamilton Hall, 3:30–4:30 p.m.

The colloquium will be presented by Dan Olsen, CHMM and Dr. Patrick Dussault. Attendance is

recommended if your laboratory uses chemicals such as: azides, picric acid, nitrocellulose, peroxide-formers (e.g. ethyl ether, THF, styrene), metal hydrides, low-molecular weight alkynes, reactive organometallics, or any other energetic materials. Registration is not required.

Please contact Elizabeth (Betsy) Howe, Environmental Health & Safety, at 402-472-5488 or ehowe2@unl.edu with any questions.

SAVE THE DATE!

The 2012 Fall Campuswide Workshops for Graduate Teaching Assistants is scheduled for Tuesday, August 14. This annual event includes workshops specifically for new TAs, as well as workshops for experienced TAs.

Keynote speaker Dr. James Lang, Associate Professor of English at Assumption College in Massachusetts is the author of *Life on the Tenure*

Track: Lessons from the First Year, a memoir chronicling his first year as a faculty member, and *On Course: A Week-by-Week Guide to Your First Semester of College Teaching*. He also writes “On Course,” a column on teaching that appears in the *Chronicle of Higher Education*. Follow him on [twitter](#) or check out his [blog](#).

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.

DEADLINES FOR DEGREES TO BE CONFERRED MAY 2012

Date	Master’s Degrees	Doctoral Degrees
March 22	Submit final exam report (or four weeks prior to oral exam/defense).	
March 29		Application for final exam report. Incomplete grades must be removed.
April 5	Submit preliminary copy of thesis (or two weeks prior to oral exam/defense).	
April 12	Incomplete grades must be removed. File results of written comprehensive exam and/or option II paper.	
April 19	Final day for oral examination.	Final day for oral examination.
April 20	Deposit thesis and final examination report form.	Deposit dissertation. Dissertation grades submitted. Final fees and final forms due.
May 6	Graduate College Commencement.	Doctoral Hooding and Commencement.

EVENTS

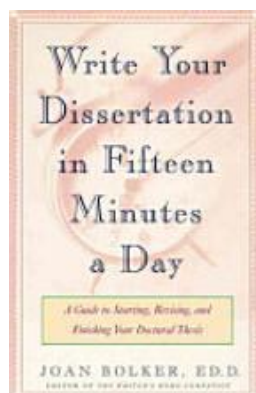
February 29	NUgrant Proposal Routing and IRB Training Sessions
March 6	Fulbright Information Session
March 14	Fulbright Information Session
March 20	NUgrant Proposal Routing and IRB Training Sessions
April 4-5	Research Fair
April 4	Graduate Student Poster Session
April 18	Lab Safety Colloquium
April 25	NUgrant Proposal Routing and IRB Training Sessions
May 30	NUgrant Proposal Routing and IRB Training Sessions
August 14	Campuswide Workshops for Graduate Teaching Assistants

Readers' Corner

Interesting reading for graduate students

WRITING YOUR DISSERTATION IN FIFTEEN MINUTES A DAY

Joan Bolker, Ed.D.



Writing a dissertation can seem like a daunting task, but Dr. Joan Bolker has guided hundreds of doctoral students through the process. In *Writing Your Dissertation in Fifteen Minutes a Day*, Bolker draws on her experience as a clinical psychologist specializing in assisting blocked writers to provide

thoughtful insight and actionable advice in ten short chapters. Bolker recognizes there are many factors beyond simply writing that go into a dissertation, and she covers such topics as developing your own work process, troubles with your advisor, and dealing with interruptions. Bolker makes it clear that *Writing Your Dissertation* is not meant to be a self-help or therapy book.

Instead, her hope is “that this book will help you substitute the carrot for the stick.”

In Chapter 1, appropriately titled “Beginning,” Bolker starts with seemingly simple advice—write your way into your dissertation, even if it is only for fifteen minutes each day. She encourages you to commit to writing at every stage, starting with simple journal entries to spur further contemplation. Subsequent chapters touch on goal setting, completing your first draft, breaking through the midway point, revision strategies, hitting the wall, and life after your dissertation. *Writing Your Dissertation* is much more than a guide to writing. It prepares you for unforeseen circumstances that can arise during the process, it offers advice and suggestions for maintaining your mental well-being, and most importantly, it offers you the encouragement and concrete advice you need to survive writing your dissertation.

