

# Graduate Connections



University of Nebraska-Lincoln

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

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## Navigating Graduate School

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

### BEING A SELF-DIRECTED LEARNER

ONE OF THE KEY DIFFERENCES between undergraduate and graduate education is that graduate students are responsible for a much larger part of the learning process.

In *Negotiating Graduate School*, Mark Rossman (2002) states, "Learners in graduate school must view themselves as active partners in the learning transaction and should try to control as much of the process as possible. They need to ask relevant and probing questions related to their own learning objectives. They need to view the teacher or professor as a resource for learning rather than the sole conveyor of knowledge."

Becoming a self-directed learner and taking primary responsibility for learning is important to success in graduate education. Distance education students especially can benefit from understanding the principles of being a self-directed learner, as all distance learning takes place outside the traditional classroom.

#### **Determine Your Learning Needs**

As you begin a project, ask yourself what you want to learn. You may need to start by thinking about your educational and professional goals, which will help you determine the direction your learning needs to take. Meet with your faculty mentor about your ideas for taking control of your learning outside the classroom. Your mentor can help you refine your learning needs.

#### **Set Clear Objectives**

Decide what you will learn in the course of your project. This is another step where working with your mentor is beneficial. Your mentor can help you create manageable goals and

targeted objectives. Be sure to focus on your learning objectives, not learning strategies and techniques.

### Specify Necessary Learning Resources

Begin compiling resources necessary to successfully achieve your learning objectives. Resources can be added or removed as necessary while you work through your project. However, beginning with a good foundation of resources will help you gain momentum early.

### Determine the Results

Finally, you should decide what the product of your learning will be. Your end results can take the form of a paper ready for publication or a literature review. Maybe you want to complete an independent reading course or research project. Other ideas include creating a training program for undergraduate students, producing a webpage, writing a manual or revising a syllabus. Be sure to develop a manageable timeline for accomplishing your learning objectives and producing the final product.

As a self-director learner, you will possess an understanding of how best to plan and accomplish your goals. These skills are beneficial regardless of whether you choose an academic career or a career outside academia.

### Resource

Rossman, M.H. (2002). *Negotiating Graduate School*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.

## GRADUATE BULLETIN

THE GRADUATE STUDIES BULLETIN contains information about all programs of graduate study offered at the University of Nebraska–Lincoln. You can find the [dynamic bulletin on line](#). The dynamic bulletin changes periodically throughout the year as needed to update policies, faculty and department information, and courses. A PDF – or static – version is created at the beginning of each academic year and also is available on line, to serve as a “snapshot” for students who need to be associated with a particular bulletin year.

The bulletin has four main sections: Graduate Policies, Academic Colleges, Areas of Study and Courses. Selecting one of those sections displays a menu listing the contents of that section.

The items that get the most traffic are included in the policies section, such as full-time registration, academic residency, assistantships, employment and financial aid information. Students in a degree or certificate program need to check out the requirements in the policies section, as well as follow the available links to the [Graduate Studies main website](#) to find forms and deadlines.

It is definitely worth taking a look at! If you have questions or need assistance in navigating the bulletin, write or call Jane Schneider,

## 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](mailto: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](mailto:gsapd2@unl.edu).

### Graduate Connections

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## Good Practices in Graduate Education

*Advice and strategies to strengthen ethics in graduate education*

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### MAINTAINING RESEARCH INTEGRITY

As research in many fields becomes increasingly competitive, so does the temptation to violate integrity in research. Misconduct in research is a serious and often career-ending violation. In her article on making the right choices in research integrity, Elizabeth Pain (2008) discusses the pressures and temptations to cut corners and make choices that would call a researcher's integrity into question. She also provides sound advice for making the right choices when you suspect misconduct in your lab.

#### Proceed with Care

Reporting suspected misconduct should not be taken lightly, so it's important to make sure you understand the wrongdoing. When your results aren't consistent with previously obtained results, ask for more information about how those results were obtained. If you still can't reproduce similar results or your questions aren't being answered, there may be a problem.

#### Find Help

Your integrity can be called into question when you knowingly allow misconduct to occur. However, you are not solely responsible for reporting transgressions in the lab. You have the support of faculty. If you're confident misconduct is occurring, start by approaching a trusted faculty member. Experienced faculty should know the proper channels to pursue and how to handle misconduct.

#### Know the Rules

Integrity in research is not just the responsibility of primary investigators. Everyone in the lab is responsible, and not understanding the rules is not

an excuse when misconduct occurs. The Office of Research Responsibility provides a variety of resources that help faculty, students and staff understand research integrity.

#### RCR Training

UNL's Responsible Conduct of Research training is available on line through Blackboard. Most graduate students are automatically registered for this training. For more information, see the next article or go to [research.unl.edu/orr/rcr.shtml#ed](http://research.unl.edu/orr/rcr.shtml#ed).

#### RCR Vignettes

The Office of Research Responsibility provides a number of [online video case studies](#) that illustrate key issues in the responsible conduct of research. These videos can be used to generate discussions about responsible conduct of research with undergraduate students in your lab or with your faculty adviser.

#### CITI Training

All university faculty, students and staff involved in research involving human subjects are required to complete the [Consortium for IRB Training Initiative \(CITI\) training](#) and renew this training every three years. Optional training in other areas also is available through CITI.

You can find more information at the [Office of Research Responsibility website](#).

#### Resources

Pain, E. (2008). Research integrity: Making the right choices. [sciencecareers.sciencemag.org/career\\_magazine/previous\\_issues/articles/2008\\_01\\_04/caredit.a0800001](http://sciencecareers.sciencemag.org/career_magazine/previous_issues/articles/2008_01_04/caredit.a0800001). Retrieved 12/21/2010.

### RESPONSIBLE CONDUCT OF RESEARCH TRAINING

THE NATIONAL SCIENCE FOUNDATION (NSF) now requires the graduate students it supports to complete a course in the responsible conduct of research. UNL has developed a 60-minute online training course (GRDC 98) that fulfills the basic

requirement and has extended it to all graduate students associated with academic departments that are eligible to apply for NSF funding.

The faculty, staff, students and administration of UNL strive to maintain a culture of accountability,

honesty, communication, forthrightness, trust and integrity. Master's degree and doctoral students come to UNL with a variety of research experience and academic backgrounds, but all should have in common the desire to become better scholars. GRDC 98 was developed to engender effective working relationships by conveying expectations, encouraging communication about the conduct of research and providing a starting place for discussion.

If you're among the 2,587 graduate students at UNL who completed the GRDC 98 course last year, thank you. The perspective you'll gain by reflecting upon and applying the principles of the course will prove invaluable. Let us know how the course has helped you or your suggestions for improvement by writing to [gsapd@unl.edu](mailto:gsapd@unl.edu).

If you haven't yet completed the course, we encourage you to join the conversation. You can find instructions for enrolling on line at the [Graduate Studies website](#).

## Professional Development Network

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

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### THE ACADEMIC JOB TALK

THE "JOB TALK" is perhaps the single most important thing you'll do during an academic interview. On the basis of your presentation, you'll be evaluated as a scholar, teacher and potential colleague. A dynamic talk is likely to result in a job offer, while a poorly organized, flat or uninspired presentation will almost certainly eliminate you from consideration.

Here are some key points to consider as you prepare for an academic job talk.

#### Before the Talk

Different institutions and disciplines have different expectations about the length and format of the job talk. Make sure you know what is expected of you. Attend job talks in your department. Listen to how faculty members evaluate the talk, then figure out what works and what doesn't. Use this information to guide your preparation.

#### *Find out who will be attending the job talk.*

Knowing your audience will help you decide how specific or technical you should make the presentation. For example, if the audience is primarily undergraduates, you'll want to spend more time explaining the significance of your work. Also, ask about the format of the talk so you'll know how much time you'll have.

Your research talk will probably be related to your dissertation, but remember, this isn't a dissertation defense. Dr. Jonathan A. Dantzig (2001), professor of mechanical and industrial engineering at the

University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, advises: "make sure that everyone who attends your seminar learns something." He notes that a good job talk should answer the following questions:

- What problem have I worked on?
- Why would anyone work on this problem?
- What is significant about what I have done?
- How has my work made progress on the problem?

He offers this sample structure for a 45-minute research job talk:

Content	Time	Target Audience	Detail Level / Purpose
Background	15	Everyone present	Your parents would understand it
Your approach	10	People in related fields	Show you know the field
Your results	10	People who work in your field	Show that you are the world expert on something
Summary	10	Everyone in the room	Relate your results to the big picture

**Prepare an organized presentation.** Good presentations have a beginning, a middle and an

end, often referred to as the “3 Ts”: *Tell ‘em what you’re going to tell ‘em; Tell ‘em; and Tell ‘em what you told ‘em.*

If you choose to use a Power Point presentation, don’t use complete sentences on your slides, because you’ll invariably end up turning your back to the audience and reading the slides verbatim. Instead, follow these general rules:

- Two- or three-word phrases for each point; avoid long sentences
- Generally one topic per slide
- Title for each slide
- Generally no more than 6 words a line
- Generally no more than 6 lines a slide
- Larger font to indicate more important information
- Font size generally ranging from 18 to 48 point
- Bullets to highlight your text items
- Don’t overwhelm your audience with fancy fonts, shaded backgrounds or custom effects (for example, words or phrases that fade or dissolve or graphics that fly in or out). These “enhancements” are sure to distract the listener from your presentation.

For more tips on creating effective Power Point presentations, see the next article.

If your material is too detailed to put on a slide, consider using handouts instead. But be sure the information is not too complex and that any tables, charts or graphs are clearly labeled. Finally, make sure you bring with you enough copies of the handouts with the pages stapled together.

***Now that you’ve prepared your presentation, practice it.*** Practice in front of your adviser, some fellow graduate students, and at least one person who knows nothing about your subject matter. Perhaps invite some undergraduates to the mock talk. Get their comments, then practice it again. Make sure your seminar is at an appropriate level for the various audience members (e.g., faculty, postdoc fellows, graduate students, undergraduate students). Get as much feedback as you can.

Practice it again. Time yourself. If you’re using slides, figure out which slide corresponds to the halfway point of your presentation. That way, you can tell whether you’re going too slowly or too fast – while you still have time to do something about it. If you’re running short of time during the talk,

it’s better to cut a pre-planned optional section in the middle than to be prevented from giving the conclusion. And don’t try to include every minor detail. Keep the big picture in mind.

### **During the Talk**

Remember that an “extemporaneous” presentation – planned thoroughly in advance yet delivered in a spontaneous manner – will be far more convincing than a scripted one. In other words, don’t read your presentation. Keep in mind the purpose of your talk. You are not delivering a research paper.

Ask the audience to hold questions until the end except for brief questions of clarification. Otherwise you’re likely to get interrupted and run out of time.

***Start by providing an overview of the topics you’ll be covering.*** Be sure to explain near the beginning why a non-specialist might be interested in your work. Near the end, be sure to explain why your substantive conclusions are of importance beyond the immediate topic of the work.

***Maintain eye contact with the audience.*** Choose people at various locations in the room and systematically sweep your eyes around to be sure you engage the entire audience. Avoid standing right in front of the projector. You’ll end up obstructing the view of people near the front, and you’ll also be partially blinded by staring into the projector’s light. If you use a laser pointer, slowly circle around the item you want the audience to attend to, instead of trying to point at it directly. If you point and you’re nervous, your shaky hand will be greatly exaggerated by the laser beam.

***Don’t stand in one spot during the entire presentation.*** Make use of both horizontal and vertical space when speaking. When asking or answering questions or emphasizing a point, move toward the audience. Create presence. Be unpredictable in your physical movement, but don’t pace back and forth.

### **After the Talk**

The question-and-answer session following your talk can be as important as the talk itself. The best way to prepare for this portion of the job talk is to anticipate the kinds of questions that might be asked, then practice responding to them. Often the biggest challenge is to understand what the questioner is asking.

## Teaching Tip

### TEN QUICK TIPS FOR TAs

In brief, here are some tips for TAs from Professor Jan Tullis at Brown University.

- Consult with your professor to define your duties.
- Attend the professor's lectures to become familiar with what level the professor expects and to observe where students have questions or problems.
- Set goals for helping students learn how to think critically, solve problems and find answers for themselves.
- Use your TA experience to practice thinking and speaking on your feet.
- Be more concerned that your students respect you than that they like you.
- Avoid the temptation to give lectures in lab; your goal should be to get students involved in hands-on work as quickly as possible.
- Encourage students to work with one another in labs, helping each other learn.
- Set forth clear grading guidelines at the beginning of the semester, but be open to exceptions in cases of medical or family emergencies.
- Learn your students' names.
- Be constructive and open-minded when grading.
- Schedule office hours that are convenient for students.
- Keep a record about aspects of various course activities that worked and didn't work, to put in the records to be passed on to the next TA, as well as for your own use in improving your effectiveness.

For more tips, visit the website of Brown's [Sheridan Center for Teaching and Learning](#).

Pause before you reply. If you're not sure what the question is, ask for clarification by restating the question in your own words and asking if that is what the questioner meant. It's okay to take notes on the remarks from the audience, especially on an interesting point that you hadn't considered. And it's not a crime to say, "I don't know. That's a great question and it would make a great follow-up research project." (Just don't answer every question like that.) Finally, never, ever argue or become defensive with the questioner.

In the end, remember that the job talk is not another defense of your work. You don't have to prove your competence. Instead, consider it a demonstration of your ability to contribute and collaborate as a potential colleague and as a clear communicator. That's what your audience is most interested in knowing.

#### Sources:

The Academic Job Search, Rice University Career Services Center.

Jonathan A. Dantzig (2001). *Landing an Academic Job: The Process and the Pitfalls*. Department of Mechanical and Industrial Engineering, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, February 22, 2001.

Perfecting The Job Talk by Professor John Eadie, Department of Wildlife, Fish & Conservation Biology, University of California, Davis, <http://iccweb.ucdavis.edu/graduates/PerfectJobTalk.htm>.

### TIPS FOR CREATING EFFECTIVE POWERPOINT PRESENTATIONS

THE POWERPOINT PRESENTATION IS UBIQUITOUS, but just because everybody does it doesn't mean everybody does it well. Here are some tips to help you save your audience from "death by PowerPoint."

- Use the slide master feature to create a consistent and simple design template. It's fine to vary the content of your slides (e.g., bulleted list, 2-column text, text & image), but be consistent with other elements such as font, colors and background.
- Simplify and limit the number of words on each screen. Use key phrases and include only essential information.
  - Generally no more than 6 words a line
  - Generally no more than 6 lines a slide
  - Avoid long sentences
  - Larger font indicates more important information
  - Font size generally ranges from 18 to 48 point
- Limit punctuation and avoid putting words in all capital letters. Empty space on the slide will enhance readability.

- Use contrasting colors for text and background. Dark text on a light background is best. Patterned backgrounds can reduce readability of text.
- Avoid the use of flashy transitions such as text fly-ins. These features may seem impressive at first, but are distracting and get old quickly.
- Overuse of special effects such as animation and sounds are distracting and may make your presentation seem less than serious.
- Use good quality images that reinforce and complement your message. Ensure that your images maintain their impact and resolution when projected on a larger screen.
- If you use builds, have content appear on the screen in a consistent, simple manner; from the top or left is best. Only "build" screens when necessary to make your point because they can slow your presentation.
- Limit the number of slides. Presenters who constantly "flip" to the next slide are likely to lose their audience. A good rule of thumb is one slide per minute.
- Learn to navigate your presentation in a non-linear fashion. PowerPoint allows the presenter to jump ahead or back without having to page through all the interim slides.
- Know how to and practice moving forward AND backward within your presentation. Students may ask to see the previous screen again.
- If possible, view your slides on the screen you'll be using for your presentation. Make sure they are readable from the back row seats. Text and graphics should be large enough to read, but not so large as to appear "loud."
- Have a Plan B in the event of technical difficulties. Remember that transparencies and handouts will not show animation or other special effects.
- Don't read from your slides. The content of your slides is for the audience, not for the presenter.
- Don't speak to your slides. It's very easy to be distracted by the content on your screen. A minor exception to this guideline is a need to draw your audience's attention to a specific part of your slide. For example, you could use a pointer to identify a trend in a graph. Otherwise, there's simply no reason to show your back.

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## PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT SERVICES AVAILABLE FROM THE OFFICE OF GRADUATE STUDIES

Fall Campuswide Workshops 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

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## Did You Know?

In fall 2010, for the seventh straight year, the University of Nebraska-Lincoln made *U.S. News and World Report's* annual evaluation of America's Best Colleges' Top 50 list of Public National Universities. UNL is ranked near the top third of all national universities, both public and private (tied with six others at 104th), and is tied with four other universities as 47th in the "Top 50" list for public national universities. This places UNL among the top one fourth of all public universities.

# Funding Opportunities

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

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**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 e-mail to Nathan Meier at [nmeier2@unl.edu](mailto:nmeier2@unl.edu). You also can search funding opportunities at [research.unl.edu/proposaldevelopment/funding.php](http://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 data bases. 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.

**Deadlines:** 3/09/11 to be reviewed in April;  
9/01/11 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](http://www.aera.net/grantsprogram/res_training/diss_grants/DGFly.html)

## STATE FARM DOCTORAL DISSERTATION AWARD

STATE FARM'S RESEARCH GRANT is designed to stimulate research and development of new knowledge in the fields of insurance, business and education, and to increase the number of qualified teachers of insurance, business and education at U.S. colleges and universities.

**Deadline:** 3/31/11

**Award Amount:** \$10,000

[www.statefarm.com/aboutus/community/grants/foundation/state\\_farm\\_foundation\\_scholarships.asp](http://www.statefarm.com/aboutus/community/grants/foundation/state_farm_foundation_scholarships.asp)

## 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:** 4/7/11

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

[www.ajsnet.org/berman.htm](http://www.ajsnet.org/berman.htm)

## ANNALEY NAEGLE REDD STUDENT AWARD IN WOMEN'S HISTORY

The Charles Redd Center for Western Studies at Brigham Young University gives the Annalee Naegle Redd Student Award in Women's History annually to an undergraduate or graduate student doing research on women in the American West (west of the Mississippi River).

**Deadline:** 03/15/2011

**Award Amount:** \$1500

[reddcenter.byu.edu/Awards/WomensHistory.dhtml](http://reddcenter.byu.edu/Awards/WomensHistory.dhtml)

## COUNCIL ON LIBRARY AND INFORMATION RESOURCES, ANDREW W. MELLON FOUNDATION

THE COUNCIL ON LIBRARY AND INFORMATION RESOURCES (CLIR) is offering a fellowship award to support original source dissertation research in the humanities or related social sciences at the Library of Congress in Washington, DC.

**Deadline:** 3/11/2011

**Award Amount:** \$25,000 maximum

[www.clir.org/fellowships/mellon/preservation.html](http://www.clir.org/fellowships/mellon/preservation.html)

## 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:** 3/31/2011

**Award Amount:** TBA

[www.swarthmore.edu/Library/peace/peacewebsite/scpc/Website/Documents/MooreFellowship.htm](http://www.swarthmore.edu/Library/peace/peacewebsite/scpc/Website/Documents/MooreFellowship.htm)

## The Graduate Student Writer

*Tips to make the writing process work for you*

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### A FEW WORDS ABOUT THE HUMBLE APOSTROPHE

Why does the apostrophe, a tiny punctuation mark, cause such big headaches for writers? When you submit a thesis or dissertation to a professor or a proposal for a fellowship or grant to a sponsor, no mistake will seem more irritating than the erroneous use – or nonuse – of the apostrophe.

The apostrophe serves two primary functions: to form contractions and to show ownership or possession.

#### To Form Contractions

The apostrophe signifies omission of letters in bringing two words together to form a single word:

- Cannot = can't
- They are = they're
- He is = he's
- Could not = couldn't
- She will = she'll
- Should have = should've (*NOT should of*)

#### To Show Ownership or Possession

Add an apostrophe and an *s* (*'s*) to words that don't already end with an *s*:

- the car belonging to Jim = Jim's car
- zoo for children = children's zoo

Add only an apostrophe after the *s* to words that already end in *s*:

- the pay for two weeks = two weeks' pay
- the hinges on all the doors = the doors' hinges

To show joint possession in a group of more than one, add an apostrophe and *s* to only the last word in the group:

- research conducted jointly by Clark and Wilson = Clark and Wilson's study

To show individual possession in a group of more than one, add an apostrophe and *s* to each word in the group:

- the opinions of Barrett and the opinions of Brown = Barrett's and Brown's opinions

**Side note:** some grammarians believe the possessive use of *'s* derives from the rule about contractions. Our English ancestors used to indicate that someone owned something with a phrase like "Michael his hat." The apostrophe in *Michael's hat* indicates omission of the letters *H* and *I* to bring two words together into a single word: *Michael his* = *Michael's*.

## Cautionary Notes

### *It's Its Own Worst Enemy*

Yes, everyone tears their hair out over this: when do you put an apostrophe in *its* and when do you not? Here's the rule: if you can substitute *it is* for *it's*, you use the apostrophe. If you can't, you don't.

*It's* is a contraction for *it is*, and *its* is a possessive pronoun meaning *belonging to it*.

- It's snowing now. *It's* is a contraction of *it is*.
- The program lost its funding. *Its* is a possessive pronoun meaning *belonging to it*.

### *Don't Use an Apostrophe for Pronouns that Already Show Possession*

*His, her, its, my, yours, theirs, ours* are all possessive pronouns.

- *Wrong*: a friend of *your's* (*their's, our's, her's*)
- *Correct*: a friend of *yours* (*theirs, ours, hers*)
- *Wrong*: *Who's* dog is this?
- *Correct*: *Whose* dog is this?

### *Don't Use an Apostrophe for Simple Plurals*

- *Wrong*: She waited three *hours'* to get a ticket.
- *Correct*: She waited three *hours* to get a ticket.

- *Wrong*: All the *player's* knew this was the last chance to score.
- *Correct*: All the *players* knew this was the last chance to score.

### *Forming Plurals of Letters and Numbers*

According to APA Style, it is not correct to use an apostrophe to form the plural of numerals, symbols and upper case letters, but it is OK to use one to form plurals of lowercase letters. The rationale for this exception to the rule is more typographical than grammatical, to prevent misreading. For example, writing "there are *three a's in bazaar*" is clearer than writing "*three as*." To form the plural of a lowercase letter, place *'s* after the letter.

- Jerry told his students to mind their p's and q's.
- Sarah made the dean's list with all As and Bs on her grade report.
- That printed page has too many &s on it.
- The 1960s were a time of great social unrest.
- Temperatures remained in the 20s all week.

As with all rules of English grammar, rules for using apostrophes may have exceptions or additional nuances. You can find a more complete explanation of apostrophe use at [GrammarBook.com](http://GrammarBook.com).

## Events

*Campus activities and other events of interest to graduate students*

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### TAKING CHARGE OF YOUR PROFESSIONAL AND CAREER DEVELOPMENT

JOIN THE OFFICE OF GRADUATE STUDIES for "Taking Charge of Your Professional and Career Development," a graduate student professional development seminar on Wed., Feb. 23, 9-10:30 a.m. in the Nebraska Union. A continental breakfast will be served at 8:30 a.m.

The "Next Stage" approach to professional preparation requires you to "think ahead, look ahead, and . . . act ahead" of the stage you currently occupy (Reis, 1997). And bridging the gap between your current skills and abilities and those you'll need in your future position is critical to achieving your goals.

The Individual Development Plan (IDP) is an invaluable tool that opens communication between you and your mentor, identifies expectations, establishes objective criteria for success and provides a planning process that includes milestones and projected tools or training experiences you'll need to reach the next stage in your career.

This seminar offers practical guidelines on how to construct an effective IDP and take charge of your professional and career development.

[Please pre-register on line](#) by February 18. For more information, contact Dr. Richard Lombardo at [rlombardo2@unl.edu](mailto:rlombardo2@unl.edu).

## LAB SAFETY COLLOQUIUM, FEB. 22 OR 23

THE NEXT LABORATORY SAFETY INITIATIVE colloquium, "Flammable-Corrosive-Toxic Gas Safety," will be offered the third week in February.

*Tues., Feb. 22:*

East Campus Union, 3:30 - 4:30 p.m.

*Wed., Feb. 23:*

Beadle Center, room N176, 9:30 - 10:30 a.m.

East Campus Union, 11:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.

Othmer Hall, room 110, 1:30 - 2:30 p.m.

Hamilton Hall, room 104, 3:30 - 4:30 p.m.

The colloquium will be presented by Pam Hendershot, Praxair Specialty Gas & Equipment.

Environmental Health and Safety (EHS), in partnership with the Office of Research & Economic Development, sponsors the campus-wide Laboratory Safety Initiative to provide up-to-date safety information for Principal Investigators (PI), staff and students who work in laboratories.

Previous colloquia are available on line at the [Environmental Health & Safety website](#) or the [Office of Research website](#).

With questions, contact Elizabeth (Betsy) Howe, Environmental Health & Safety, at 472-5488 or [ehowe2@unl.edu](mailto:ehowe2@unl.edu).

## WORKSHOP ON USING NUGRANT TO FILE IRB PROTOCOLS, FEB. 23 OR APRIL 27

UNL'S HUMAN RESEARCH PROTECTIONS PROGRAM will offer a workshop on filing IRB protocols in NUgrant on Wed., Feb, 23, at 2:30 p.m. in Room 201 Alexander West. The workshop will be repeated on April 27. If you plan to use human subjects in

your research, you will be required to get permission from the Institutional Review Board. You can file your application electronically through the NUgrant system. Find more [information about the workshop or register on line](#).

## NURAMP WORKSHOPS TO BE OFFERED IN SPRING 2011

THE SPRING 2010 NURAMP (Research Administration Management Program) workshop series for UNL faculty, staff, postdocs and graduate students who conduct, support or administer research projects begins in March.

Topics to be addressed include proposal development strategies, preparing proposals for submission, creating proposal budgets, conducting research responsibly, and receiving and administering an award. Additional elective sessions will focus on UNL's export control policy, using the report feature in NUgrant, PARs (Personnel Activity Reports) and effort reporting, and proposal submission through Grants.gov and other electronic systems.

Participants who complete the entire series may earn a certificate. However, the workshops can stand alone and it is not necessary to register for the entire series.

A complete schedule of dates, times and locations, as well as registration information, is available at the [NURAMP website](#). For more information contact Liz Banset, NURAMP coordinator, [ebanset1@unl.edu](mailto:ebanset1@unl.edu), 472-7003.

**New this spring:** NURAMP also offers several short, narrated workshops for self-directed learners in its [e-Learning Library](#).

## WRITE WINNING GRANTS SEMINAR, MARCH 18

THE OFFICE OF RESEARCH AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT will offer a grant writing seminar, "Write Winning Grants," on March 18, 8:30 a.m.-5 p.m., in the Nebraska Union auditorium.

The seminar comprehensively addresses both practical and conceptual aspects important to the proposal writing process and emphasizes idea development, identification of appropriate granting agencies, and tips and strategies of proven value in presenting an applicant's case to reviewers.

David Morrison, co-founder of Grant Writers' Seminars and Workshops, LLC, will lead the session.

This free seminar is primarily for UNL faculty. Other UNL staff, postdoctoral research fellows and graduate students are welcome to attend without charge as space allows.

[Advance registration is required and available on line.](#)

If you have questions, contact Peg Filliez, operations specialist, Office of Research and Economic Development, 472-2851.

## 2011 RESEARCH FAIR, APRIL 12-14

THE OFFICE OF RESEARCH & Economic Development invites you to attend the 2011 UNL Research Fair, running from Tues., April 12, through Thurs., April 14. The annual campuswide celebration of research and creativity features presentations and events for faculty, staff, students and the public. The fair brings national experts and others to campus where faculty, students and staff can interact with and learn from them.

This spring, the Research Fair will focus on topics related to ag policy. As always, a variety of events and presentations will provide opportunities for faculty, postdocs and students to interact and share information about their research successes.

More information is available at the [Research Fair website](#). The schedule will be updated as the fair dates draw near, so be sure to check periodically for new information. The 2011 Research Fair is free and open to the public.

## GRADUATE STUDENT POSTER FAIR

IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE RESEARCH FAIR, the 2011 Graduate Student Poster Fair will take place on Wednesday, April 13, from 3 to 5 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 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 31. More details about the poster competition are available on line at the [Research Fair website](#). Questions may be directed to Renee Rodriguez Batman at 402-472-5832 or [rbatman2@unl.edu](mailto:rbatman2@unl.edu).

## NEBRASKA LECTURE, APRIL 14

MARGARET JACOBS, UNL professor of history, will present the Nebraska Lecture on April 14. Her topic is "A Battle for Children: Indigenous Child Removal in the United States and Australia from 1880-1940." Jacobs is winner of the 2010 Bancroft Prize, one of the highest honors for American history writing, for her book, *White Mother to a Dark Race: Settler Colonialism, Maternalism, and*

*the Removal of Indigenous Children in the American West and Australia, 1880-1940.*

The free public lecture begins at 3:30 p.m. in the Nebraska Union auditorium, with a reception following. This Nebraska Lecture is sponsored by the UNL Research Council, the Office of the Chancellor, and the Office of Research & Economic Development.

# Announcements

News of note for graduate students

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## CALL FOR NOMINATIONS: 2011-2012 PREPARING FUTURE FACULTY PROGRAM

NOMINATIONS ARE NOW 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 seminar (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, 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, as 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 alums 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, [lbellows1@unl.edu](mailto:lbellows1@unl.edu) or 402-472-9764, or visit the [PFF website](#).

## DISSERTATION SUPPORT GROUP

THE UNIVERSITY HEALTH CENTER and Counseling and Psychology Services will offer dissertation support group sessions, March 2, 9 and 16, from 2:30 to 4 p.m. in the Nebraska Union (room

posted). Discussion topics include time and stress management, writing skills development and techniques for overcoming procrastination. Contact Marty at 472-7450 for more information.

## IMPORTANT STUDENT HEALTH INSURANCE INFORMATION

BEGINNING SPRING 2011, if you're a special fellowship or traineeship recipient who needs health insurance, and the university's portion is being paid by your department, you'll be responsible for enrolling in the insurance program yourself, and your department will work with the Office of Student Accounts to process payment.

If this describes your situation and you haven't enrolled in the health insurance plan but would like to, please call Jane Schneider at 402-472-8670 for instructions. Graduate assistants with a health insurance benefit and international students will still be enrolled automatically. Contact Jane Schneider, [jschneid@unlnotes.unl.edu](mailto:jschneid@unlnotes.unl.edu) or 402-472-8670, for more information.

## 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](http://www.unl.edu/gradstudies/current/degrees).

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### DEADLINES for degrees to be conferred May 2011

Date	Master's Degrees	Doctoral Degrees
March 24	Submit final exam report (or four weeks prior to oral). Incomplete grades must be removed.	
March 31		Application for final exam report. Incomplete grades must be removed.
April 7	Submit preliminary copy of thesis (or two weeks prior to oral).	
April 15	Incomplete grades must be removed. File results of written comprehensive exam and/or option II paper.	
April 21	Final day for oral examination.	Final day for oral examination.
April 22	Deposit thesis and final examination report form. Pay binding fee.	Deposit dissertation. Dissertation grades submitted. Final fees and final forms due.
May 6	Graduate College Commencement.	Doctoral Hooding and Commencement.

### EVENTS

Feb. 22 & 23	Lab Safety Initiative Colloquium
Feb. 23	“Taking Charge of Your Professional and Career Development” Seminar
Feb. 23	NUgrant IRB Workshop
March 9-April 21	NURAMP Workshops
March 2, 9, 16	Dissertation Support Group
March 18	“Write Winning Grants” Seminar
April 3	Deadline to register for Graduate Student Poster Fair
April 12-14	Research Fair
April 14	Nebraska Lecture

## Interactions

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

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### MyRED HINTS

HERE ARE SOME IMPORTANT THINGS to know when using MyRed.

Avoid trouble when registering by completing all necessary steps in the process. You can put courses in the shopping cart, but unless you continue to

the last step, you might find that you're not registered for the courses you need.

The default number of credits for courses with variable credit hours, such as an independent study, research, thesis or dissertation, is one (1). Be

careful to select the number of units you need before completing the registration.

If you have withdrawn from a course, it will appear on your course list with a **blue X** through it. If you're still registered for a course, it will appear with a **green circle** and a check mark beside it.

Please note that your official registration is in MyRed, not in Blackboard. Blackboard is a course tool used by many instructors, but it isn't UNL's registration site.

The last day to change a course registration to or from *Pass/No Pass* is March 4. The deadline for withdrawing from a course is April 8.

Use the financial aid forms located in the financial aid section in the Student Center area of MyRED to indicate if you have any fellowships or assistantships or if you're eligible for tuition remission. Filling out and returning these forms to Financial Aid ensures that your financial aid package is awarded accurately and no adjustments are needed when it comes time to pay your bills. You don't want to end up having to pay back loans immediately, so it's well worth your while to self-

report any awards you may have in addition to financial aid.

If you don't have an updated e-mail address in MyRed but have asked to receive your billing notices via e-mail, you may not have seen the following message: "Your January 2011 consolidated bill is now available to view on MyRED <http://myred.unl.edu>. Payment is due February 12, 2011."

If you're a graduate assistant and your student account is up to date, you might see a note in MyRed that says your bill isn't due until March.

You can reach the UNL Office of Student Accounts at 402-472-2887. Information regarding your bill can be found via the following links:

- [Find your bill in MyRED](#)
- [See your payment options](#)
- [Find billing and registration information for 2010-2011](#)

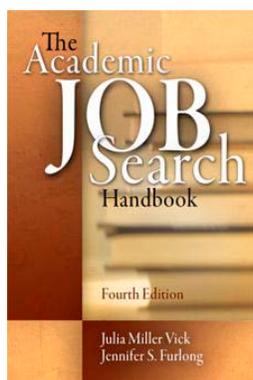
## Readers' Corner

*Interesting reading for graduate students*

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### THE ACADEMIC JOB SEARCH HANDBOOK, 4<sup>TH</sup> EDITION

By Julia Miller Vick and Jennifer S. Furlong  
University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008



postdoctoral opportunities and alternatives to the academic job search.

*The Academic Job Search Handbook* provides a comprehensive tool for applicants at any stage of the academic job search. Now in its fourth edition, this handbook has been expanded to include sample resumes for individuals seeking non-faculty positions, advice on seeking

*The Academic Search Handbook* takes applicants all the way through the job search and beyond, from sample materials and interviewing to negotiations and starting the job. Chapters about what applicants need to know before they begin and how to create written materials will benefit students who aren't quite ready for the job market but want to start preparing.

With sample materials and advice that encompasses science and technology fields as well as the humanities and social sciences, *The Academic Job Search Handbook* truly has something for everyone seeking a job in academia.