

# 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

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

### SEVEN KEYS TO GRADUATE SCHOOL SUCCESS

*Adapted from the University of British Columbia PowerPoint: On Being a Successful Graduate Student, [www.grad.ubc.ca/new/welcome/GradSuccess.ppt](http://www.grad.ubc.ca/new/welcome/GradSuccess.ppt)*

Here are seven “keys” essential to a successful and well-rounded graduate career.

**Be proactive – take responsibility for your own grad school experience.**

- Think about what you really want from graduate school, and identify opportunities to attain those goals.
- Continue the mental transition from being told what to do, to deciding what to do.
- Don’t wait for faculty members to come to find you. Take the initiative and build relationships with faculty in your department.

**Participate in the intellectual community of your department and campus.**

- Seek input and collaboration from faculty members and your peers – don’t isolate yourself.
- Attend optional seminars and lectures within and beyond your program or department.
- Attend and present at conferences.
- Begin thinking of yourself as a member of your profession and academic field.

**Know your program requirements and timelines.**

*Masters students*

- Coursework
- Comprehensive or qualifying exams
- Research thesis or major project
- Public presentation and/or defense of thesis or project

*Doctoral students*

- Coursework

- Supervisory committee
- Research proposal approval
- Comprehensive exam
- Dissertation completion and defense

### **Create and follow an annual plan.**

- Track your specific program requirements (e.g., courses taken, comprehensives, research, thesis, etc.).
- Schedule meetings with your supervisor and committee.
- Publish articles and produce patents, copyrights, artistic works, performances, designs, etc.
- Attend conferences and make presentations.
- Apply for fellowships, scholarships and research grants.
- Think “next stage” — develop an individual professional development plan for the future.

### **Establish positive relationships with your supervisor and members of your committee.**

- Schedule regular meetings with your entire supervisory committee – *at least* once a year.
- Have a clear purpose for each meeting, and communicate the agenda in advance to your supervisor / committee.

- Follow up on items discussed in meetings – keep your supervisor informed of your progress and challenges.
- Act as a “junior colleague” – ask questions, advance ideas, show interest and support for shared goals.

### **Bring a professional approach to your studies and interactions.**

- Build key skills: organization, preparedness, collegiality, budgeting.
- Take workshops on teaching; write a grant proposal.
- Mentor an undergraduate researcher.
- Learn about research ethics and scholarly integrity.

### **Seek balance and support in your life.**

- Remember that you have friends and family outside grad school.
- Seek out the many resources on your campus that can help you through the tough times (join a graduate student organization).
- Remember that this will be among the most inspiring and satisfying times in your life.
- And, because your mother isn't here: Get enough sleep, make time for physical exercise, and eat your veggies!

## **THE NON-TRADITIONAL STUDENT: AN AGELESS ENTERPRISE**

THE NON-TRADITIONAL GRADUATE STUDENT is defined as an adult who is pursuing a higher degree part-time while working full-time, or one who returns to school full- or part-time after a significant break or interruption (starting a family, starting a career, switching careers, or serving in the military), while maintaining responsibilities such as employment, family, and other obligations of adult life.

As a non-traditional student, you can make significant contributions in the graduate classroom. You have valuable work and life experience and are likely to view education as an investment, giving you strong incentive to complete your graduate program successfully. You may have made the (perhaps difficult) decision to enter graduate school at this stage of your life for any number of reasons:

- Your work responsibilities have changed and you need to keep up with advances in your field.

- You've been hit by the recession and find yourself out of work and looking for a new career.
- A recent family or life transition – marriage, death, divorce – has inspired you to continue your education.
- You've suddenly been afforded free time you've never had before (maybe your children are grown and family demands are less time-consuming).
- You want to complete a degree you may have started but could not finish because of family/work responsibilities, financial concerns, or lack of interest/motivation.

Even so, no matter how strongly motivated you are, having lived for so long outside the “college student” paradigm, you may struggle a bit with self-confidence. If you are older than most of the students in your graduate program (older, even, than some of your professors), you may have an occasional twinge

of discomfort – can they really teach this old dog new tricks? How do you balance your obligations outside of school with the demands of your academic program? As a parent (perhaps a grandparent), full-time worker or active community member you may need special help with time management to successfully meet this bevy of obligations in addition to academic demands.

There are only so many hours in a day. You can't abandon your other obligations to job or family, so devise a new "life schedule" that accommodates your academic responsibilities. Schedule on-campus classes for free times in your day, or look into online courses that give you the flexibility of attending "class" at a time that suits you best. There's no need to take the maximum credit hours allowed each semester – build your academic program slowly.

Be careful about the standards you set for yourself. Your ultimate goals might be to make excellent grades, publish in top-of-the-line journals, conduct groundbreaking research and become engaged at the highest levels in professional associations, but you might want to scale back your expectations right out of the gate. If you are balancing a job and parenthood, meeting one out of four of these goals might be reasonable each semester as you ease your way into your graduate program, especially if it helps you maintain your sanity.

Don't worry about being the best at everything; focus on what you are learning instead. Also, because of your hectic schedule, it can be easy to put assignments or studying off – but don't fall into that trap. Keep up with your reading and your project tasks, taking time each day to devote to your graduate program.

And don't overlook the value of a dedicated mentor or adviser or the services and resources provided by the Office of Graduate Studies. Consider buying a copy of *The Portable Dissertation Advisor: Advice for Non-traditional Graduate Students* by Miles T. Bryant – it's an excellent resource to help you manage the additional demands you'll face when it's time to work on your dissertation.

### Sources

Association of Non-traditional Students in Higher Education, <http://www.antshe.org/>  
Roberts, Hannah. Nontraditional Students: Earning a Grad Degree at Any Age. <http://www.gradview.com/articles/graduatestudies/nontraditional-graduate-students.html>  
Benshoff, James M. and Lewis, Henry A. Nontraditional College Students. ERIC Digest. <http://www.ericdigests.org/1992-3/college.htm>

## KEEPING CONNECTED AT A DISTANCE

WITH THE EXPANDING NUMBER of online course offerings now available to graduate students (and in some cases, entire curricula), it's likely you will – if you haven't already done so – take a "distance learning" course as part of your program. While distance learning has a number of advantages, the biggest challenge is maintaining your engagement and connection to the university. It takes extra effort to stay on task and be engaged in a course when the classroom is your office or living room instead of a room full of desks occupied by other students in a campus building.

## 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).

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The following advice comes from other students and faculty who have participated in online courses.

### **Before the course begins:**

- Make sure your technology is working before the class starts. Don't try to learn the technology and the course content at the same time.
- Make sure you are set up to receive e-mail or other communications from your instructor.
- Buy your books early and get your syllabi as soon as possible. Getting ahead or reading ahead is sometimes the best way to stay on top of things.
- Read the course syllabus and course Web site carefully and follow instructions.

### **During the course:**

- Log into your course as soon as it begins. During the semester, log in regularly, at least 3-4 times per week.
- Explore and utilize all course resources provided, including supplementary resources.
- Keep a calendar to record important dates for assignments and to record work you have completed. When you're a full-time employee, spouse, parent or grandparent, due dates can be easily missed. Note when you have finished watching lecture videos, reading assignments and course projects. You can see at a glance if you are staying on track.

### **Interact with instructors and fellow students**

- Participate in online chats or discussion groups. This may be your only chance to have the kind of interaction you would normally have in on-campus classes.
- Get to know your classmates! They will be in many of your classes and you can end up with good friends from all over the world who can potentially become resources for jobs and future collaboration. You may run into them at professional meetings or conferences.
- Carefully read and process feedback from your professors before reacting negatively. After a day or so, if you still disagree with the grade or other comments, bring it up constructively. Your views may be considered if presented in a professional manner.

### **Understand your own learning needs**

- Remember to make time for both work and play. Achieving scholastically is important but so is taking care of the personal relationships in your

life. These relationships are what sustain you when writing and testing becomes stressful.

- Read, read, read. Don't assume you know it all, always keep reading and take notes on what you read because you will need to reference your material. Always cite the information correctly and in the manner prescribed by your instructor.
- Don't expect all the answers to come to you – do research and always ask questions if you don't understand something.
- Remember this is your education and you are the responsible one here. Checking into your classes every day or every other day is beneficial to you and it also shows your professors how interested you are in their course.

### **Ask for help when you need it**

- Keep contact information handy. Contacting the appropriate person or department when you have a question will cut down on confusion and keep you from being sent from office to office before finding the right place to ask your question.
- Thoroughly familiarize yourself with the [university](#) and [graduate studies](#) Web sites – you'll find a lot of helpful information there.

**If you are teaching an online course**, some UNL distance education faculty members offer their advice.

*Julie Johnson, professor and chair, Child, Youth and Family Studies:*

- I have a three-hour period during the week that I consider my class time. A note on the door that says "Class in Session" designates the time for grading papers, sending and returning e-mails to students, calling when needed, preparing a new module and making it available to students, entering into discussion on the discussion board. If a time is not designated for class duties, it is too easy to put off working on the course. Having time set aside helps me interact promptly with students and also helps students stay on track so that they keep up with the course.
- Students appreciate a fast turn-around time with assignments. The syllabus states that I will respond once a week. I read messages as soon as I receive them but I collect them, too, so that I can place an announcement in the classroom in case more than one student has the same question. I ask the students to write a short paper or provide a PowerPoint about themselves so that everyone can get to know one another. I create a "cheat sheet"

that I make available to the class so everyone can get acquainted and see who's "talking."

*Jody Isernhagen, associate professor, Teaching, Learning and Teacher Education:*

- Meeting with students at national conferences can help you connect with each other.
- Phone or online conferences with students once a semester help to establish the next steps and establish a timeline for success.
- Establishing clear expectations and deadlines for work assignments cuts down on frustration for the instructor and the student.
- Having a separate location for students to ask the professor any questions they might have about the coursework is helpful in case the student needs one-on-one attention.
- Communication and course success is enhanced by providing specific feedback to students about discussions, assignment, and projects; summarizing discussion feedback and sharing it with all students; and using both large group and small group discussion opportunities.

*Richard Hoover, senior lecturer, Education Leadership in Higher Education:*

Three major actions are needed to be successful in assisting distance education students: communicate, communicate, communicate! Students relate to and readily interact via e-mail, telephone, or Skype. Keeping in touch frequently helps the students feel connected and engaged. Students will model good communication behaviors by professors because they catch on quickly.

If you are thinking about registering for distance programs or courses, take this self-assessment quiz to assess your comfort with learning at a distance: <http://onlinegraduate.unl.edu/index.shtml>.

#### Sources

Survey of the Associated Students of Washington State University Distance Degree Programs <http://www.aswsu-ddp.wsu.edu/mentor/AdviceContest/advice.pdf>

10 Tips for Success in Distance Education Courses, North Carolina State University <http://distance.ncsu.edu/advising/how-to-succeed.php>

## Good Practices in Graduate Education

*Advice and strategies to strengthen ethics in graduate education*

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*As students, teachers and researchers, it is our responsibility to act ethically and with integrity in class, our writings and research. You trust your colleagues both on the UNL campus and in the greater academic community to treat your intellectual works with respect and without misrepresentation and in turn, they trust you. Plagiarism, one form of misrepresentation, is a violation of the [UNL Student Code of Conduct \(section 4.2.a.3\)](#) and is defined as: "Presenting the work of another as one's own (i.e., without proper acknowledgment of the source) and submitting examinations, theses, reports, speeches, drawings, laboratory notes or other academic work in whole or in part as one's own when such work has been prepared by another person or copied from another person." Graduate students are held to a "zero tolerance" standard for all aspects of the Student Code of Conduct, including plagiarism. The most common sanction for graduate students who engage in plagiarism is suspension or expulsion.*

*Plagiarism can take many forms and is more than just copying another person's writing word for word. The following article is reprinted with permission from the Web site [Plagiarism.org](http://Plagiarism.org) to help identify and therefore avoid the different types of plagiarism.*

### TYPES OF PLAGIARISM

ANYONE WHO HAS WRITTEN OR GRADED A PAPER knows that plagiarism is not always a black and white issue. The boundary between plagiarism and research is often unclear. Learning to recognize the various forms of plagiarism, especially the more ambiguous ones, is an important step towards effective prevention. Many people think of plagiarism as copying another's work, or borrowing someone else's original ideas. But terms

like 'copying' and 'borrowing' can disguise the seriousness of the offense:

#### Sources Not Cited

##### 1. "The Ghost Writer"

The writer turns in another's work, word-for-word, as his or her own.

2. **"The Photocopy"**  
The writer copies significant portions of text straight from a single source, without alteration.
  3. **"The Potluck Paper"**  
The writer tries to disguise plagiarism by copying from several different sources, tweaking the sentences to make them fit together while retaining most of the original phrasing.
  4. **"The Poor Disguise"**  
Although the writer has retained the essential content of the source, he or she has altered the paper's appearance slightly by changing key words and phrases.
  5. **"The Labor of Laziness"**  
The writer takes the time to paraphrase most of the paper from other sources and make it all fit together, instead of spending the same effort on original work.
  6. **"The Self-Stealer"**  
The writer "borrows" generously from his or her previous work, violating policies concerning the expectation of originality adopted by most academic institutions.
2. **"The Misinformer"**  
The writer provides inaccurate information about the sources, making it impossible to find them.
  3. **"The Too-Perfect Paraphrase"**  
The writer properly cites a source, but neglects to put in quotation marks text that has been copied word-for-word, or close to it. Although attributing the basic ideas to the source, the writer is falsely claiming original presentation and interpretation of the information.
  4. **"The Resourceful Citer"**  
The writer properly cites all sources, paraphrasing and using quotations appropriately. The catch? The paper contains almost no original work! It is sometimes difficult to spot this form of plagiarism because it looks like any other well-researched document.
  5. **"The Perfect Crime"**  
Well, we all know it doesn't exist. In this case, the writer properly quotes and cites sources in some places, but goes on to paraphrase other arguments from those sources without citation. This way, the writer tries to pass off the paraphrased material as his or her own analysis of the cited material.

#### Sources Cited (But Still Plagiarized)

1. **"The Forgotten Footnote"**  
The writer mentions an author's name for a source, but neglects to include specific information on the location of the material referenced. This often masks other forms of plagiarism by obscuring source locations.

#### Source

Types of Plagiarism (n.d.) Retrieved Oct. 2, 2009, from [http://www.plagiarism.org/plag\\_article\\_types\\_of\\_plagiarism.html](http://www.plagiarism.org/plag_article_types_of_plagiarism.html)  
Reprinted with permission.

NOTE: the UNL Ethics Center is hosting a brown bag luncheon at 12:30 on Nov. 12 in the Nebraska Union, featuring Dr. Deborah Minter on "Teaching about Plagiarism." [Click here](#) for more information.

## Essential Connections

*Critical information about the fundamentals of graduate study at UNL*

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### TIPS ON FORMING YOUR SUPERVISORY COMMITTEE

TO ASSURE THAT DOCTORAL STUDENTS receive careful advice and mentoring throughout their careers, a supervisory committee is established before the student has accumulated 45 credit hours. If transfer credits from another institution are accepted by the graduate committee, they are included in those 45 hours.

Eva Bachman, doctoral specialist in the Office of Graduate Studies, has some helpful advice for students about forming a supervisory committee for the doctoral program.

- Start thinking right away about a chairperson for your committee if you have not already identified a major adviser who would serve in that capacity.
- Taking courses that are not in your major or department but are of interest to you and complement your research interest may help you identify an outside representative on the committee.
- Talking with students in your department may provide good advice about committee members.

- Your major adviser or committee chair may have recommendations about the other members needed on the committee, in regard to their work styles and research interests.
- Don't be afraid to make changes in your committee – it might be necessary if you work for a while in the program and discover that someone

else might be able to provide very valuable expertise to your research.

Use the [Graduate Studies Web site](#) to view information about committees, forms and deadlines. If you have questions or need further information, contact Eva at [ebachman1@unl.edu](mailto:ebachman1@unl.edu).

## THE TEN WORST TEACHING MISTAKES

*Adapted with permission from an article by Rick Reis in Tomorrow's Professor E-Mail Newsletter\**

MOST ACADEMIC CAREERS BEGIN with zero prior instruction on college teaching and so may be marred by a number of early blunders. Here are the top ten most common mistakes college teachers make, in roughly increasing order of badness. Doing some of the things on the list may occasionally be justified, so we're not telling you to avoid all of them at all costs, only suggesting that you avoid making a habit of any of them.

**Mistake #10. When you ask a question in class, immediately call for volunteers.** You know what happens when you do that. Most of the students avoid eye contact, and either you get a response from one of the two or three who always volunteer or you answer your own question. Few students even bother to think about the question, since they know that eventually someone else will provide the answer. We have a suggestion for a better way to handle questioning, but it's the same one we'll have for Mistake #9, so let's hold off on it for a moment.

**Mistake #9. Call on students cold.** You stop in mid-lecture and point your finger abruptly: "Joe, what's the next step?" Some students are comfortable under that kind of pressure, but many could have trouble thinking of their own name. If you frequently call on students without giving them time to think ("cold-calling"), the ones who are intimidated by it won't be following your lecture as much as praying that you don't land on them. Even worse, as soon as you call on someone, the others breathe a sigh of relief and stop thinking.

A better approach to questioning in class is active learning<sup>1</sup>. Ask the question and give the students a short time to come up with an answer, working either individually or in small groups. Stop them when the time is up and call on a few to report what they came up with. Then, if you haven't gotten the complete response you're looking for, call for volunteers.

The students will have time to think about the question, and – unlike what happens when you always jump directly to volunteers (Mistake #10) – most will try to come up with a response because they don't want to look bad if you call on them.

With active learning you'll also avoid the intimidation of cold-calling (Mistake #9) and you'll get more and better answers to your questions. Most importantly, real learning will take place in class, something that doesn't happen much in traditional lectures<sup>2</sup>.

**Mistake #8. Turn classes into PowerPoint shows.** It has become common for instructors to put their lecture notes into PowerPoint and to spend their class time mainly droning through the slides. Classes like that are generally a waste of time for everyone<sup>3</sup>. If the students don't have paper copies of the slides, there's no way they can keep up. If they have the copies, they can read the slides faster than the instructor can lecture through them, the classes are exercises in boredom, the students have little incentive to show up, and many don't. Turning classes into extended slide shows is a specific example of Mistake #7.

**Mistake #7. Fail to provide variety in instruction.** Non-stop lecturing produces very little learning, but if good instructors never lectured they could not motivate students by occasionally sharing their experience and wisdom. Pure PowerPoint shows are ineffective, but so are lectures with no visual content – schematics, diagrams, animations, photos, video clips, etc. – for which PowerPoint is ideal. Individual student assignments alone would not teach students the critical skills of teamwork, leadership and conflict management they will need to succeed as professionals, but team assignments alone would not promote the equally important trait of independent learning.

## Teaching Tip

### MERLOT

MERLOT ([merlot.org](http://merlot.org)) is a user-centered, searchable collection of higher education online learning materials, catalogued by registered members. MERLOT's strategic goal is to improve the effectiveness of teaching and learning by increasing the quantity and quality of peer reviewed online learning materials that can be easily incorporated into faculty designed courses.

The MERLOT repository contains learning materials categorized into 14 different learning material types (described in more detail at the MERLOT Web site): simulation, animation, tutorial, drill and practice, quiz/test, lecture/presentation, case study, collection, reference material, learning object repository, workshop and training material, 3D learning object and open textbook.

Materials are organized into 18 discipline communities: biology, business, chemistry, criminal justice, engineering, English, faculty development, health science, history, information technology, library and information services, mathematics, music, physics, psychology, statistics, teacher education and world languages.

Many materials in MERLOT have assignments and comments attached to them. Assignments are projects, papers, or activities that can be part of the coursework for a class. They are linked to a learning module in MERLOT and may address only that learning objective or may involve other activities as well. Individuals who have used the module can post comments, and rate the module.

MERLOT members also can create personal collections of MERLOT modules for easy access to use for specific purposes, classes or topics.

Effective instruction mixes things up: boardwork, multimedia, storytelling, discussion, activities, individual assignments, and group work (being careful to avoid Mistake #6). The more variety you build in, the more effective the class is likely to be.

**Mistake #6. Have students work in groups with no individual accountability.** All students and instructors who have ever been involved with group work know the potential downside. One or two students do the work, the others coast along understanding little of what their more responsible teammates did, everyone gets the same grade, resentments and conflicts build, and the students learn nothing about high-performance teamwork and how to achieve it.

The way to make group work work is cooperative learning, an exhaustively researched instructional method that effectively promotes development of both cognitive and interpersonal skills. One of the defining features of this method is individual accountability – holding each team member accountable for the entire project and not just the part that he or she may have focused on. References on cooperative learning offer suggestions for achieving individual accountability, including giving individual exams covering the full range of knowledge and skills required to complete the project and assigning individual grades based in part on how well the students met their responsibilities to their team<sup>4,5</sup>.

**Mistake #5. Fail to establish relevance.** Students learn best when they clearly perceive the relevance of course content to their interests and career goals. The "trust me" approach to education ("You may have no idea now why you need to know this stuff but, trust me, in a few years you'll see how important it is!") doesn't inspire students with a burning desire to learn, and those who do learn tend to be motivated only by grades.

To provide better motivation, begin the course by describing how the content relates to important technological and social problems and to whatever you know of the students' experience, interests and career goals, and do the same thing when you introduce each new topic. (If there are no such connections, why is the course being taught?) Consider applying inductive methods such as guided inquiry and problem-based learning, which use real-world problems to provide context for all course material<sup>6</sup>. You can anticipate some student resistance to those methods, since they force students to take unaccustomed responsibility for their own learning, but there are effective ways to defuse resistance<sup>7</sup>; and the methods lead to enough additional learning to justify whatever additional effort it may take to implement them.

**Mistake #4. Give tests that are too long.** Some professors routinely give exams that are too long for most of their students. The exams may include questions that involve a lot of time-consuming analysis and/or calculations, or problems with unfamiliar twists that may take a long time to figure out, or just too many problems. The few students who work fast enough to finish may make careless mistakes but can still do well because their responses may earn partial credit, while those who

never get to some problems or who can't quickly figure out the tricks get failing grades. After several such experiences, many students may drop the course or switch to another discipline altogether.

If you want to evaluate your students' potential to be successful professionals, test their mastery of the knowledge and skills you're teaching, not their problem-solving speed. After you make up a test and think it's perfect, take it and time yourself, and make sure you give the students at least three times longer to take it than you needed (since you made it up, you don't have to stop and think about it).

**Mistake #3: Get stuck in a rut.** Some instructors teach a course two or three times, feel satisfied with their lecture notes and PowerPoint slides and assignments, and don't change a thing for the rest of their careers, except maybe to update a couple of references. Such courses often become mechanical for the instructors, boring for the students, and after a while, hopelessly antiquated.

Things are always happening that provide incentives and opportunities for improving courses. New developments in course subject areas are presented in research journals; changes in the global economy call on programs to equip their graduates with new skills; improved teaching techniques are described in conference presentations and papers; and new instructional resources are made available in digital libraries such as [Merlot](#) (see Teaching Tip, p. 7).

This is not to say that you have to make major revisions in your course every time you teach it. Rather, just keep your eyes open for possible improvements you might make in the time available to you. Go to some education sessions at professional conferences; read articles in educational journals in your discipline; visit one or two of those digital libraries to see what tutorials, demonstrations, and simulations they've got for your course; and commit to making one or two changes in the course whenever you teach it. If you do that, the course won't get stale, and neither will you.

**Mistake #2. Teach without clear learning objectives.** The traditional approach to teaching is to design lectures and assignments that cover topics listed in the syllabus, give exams on those topics, and move on. The first time most instructors think seriously about what they want students to do with the course material is when they write the exams, by which time it may be too late to provide sufficient practice in the

skills required to solve the exam problems. It is pointless, and arguably unethical, to test students on skills you haven't really taught.

A key to making courses coherent and tests fair is to write learning objectives – explicit statements of what students should be able to do if they have learned what the instructor wants them to learn – and to use the objectives as the basis for designing lessons, assignments and exams<sup>8</sup>. The objectives should all specify observable actions (e.g., *define, explain, calculate, solve, model, critique* and *design*), avoiding vague and unobservable terms like *know, learn, understand* and *appreciate*. Besides using the objectives to design your instruction, consider sharing them with the students as study guides for exams. The clearer you are about your expectations (especially high-level ones that involve deep analysis and conceptual understanding, critical thinking and creative thinking), the more likely the students will be to meet them, and nothing clarifies expectations like good learning objectives.

**Mistake #1. Disrespect students.** How much students learn in a course depends to a great extent on the instructor's attitude. Two different instructors could teach the same material to the same group of students using the same methods, give identical exams, and get dramatically different results. Under one teacher, the students might get good grades and give high ratings to the course and instructor; under the other teacher, the grades could be low, the ratings could be abysmal, and if the course is a gateway to the curriculum, many of the students might not be there next semester.

The difference between the students' performance in the two classes could easily stem from the instructors' attitudes. If Instructor A conveys respect for the students and a sense that he/she cares about their learning, and Instructor B appears indifferent and/or disrespectful, the differences in exam grades and ratings should come as no surprise.

Even if you genuinely respect and care about your students, you can unintentionally give them the opposite sense. To avoid the appearance of indifference: 1) never make sarcastic remarks in class about students' skills, intelligence, and work ethics; 2) don't disparage their questions or their responses to your questions; 3) demonstrate that you like the subject and enjoy teaching it; 4) come to class prepared and manage time carefully; 5) show up for office hours and encourage students to come in with

questions. If you give students a sense that you respect them, the class will probably be a good experience for everyone.

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\*Subscribe to the *Tomorrow's Professor* mailing list at <https://mailman.stanford.edu/mailman/listinfo/tomorrow-s-professor>.

## IMPROVING TEACHING THROUGH STUDENT FEEDBACK

INCREASINGLY, SEARCH COMMITTEES charged with making decisions about faculty appointments ask candidates to provide evidence of both teaching development efforts and teaching effectiveness; further, candidates often are asked to discuss teaching strategies and philosophies, as well as research interests, during the interview process.

The Teaching Documentation Program (TDP), an initiative offered through the Office of Graduate Studies, helps graduate students teach better, now and in the future, and prepares them for the job search process by helping them document their teaching development efforts. The TDP offers an early opportunity to reflect on the link between teaching and student learning outcomes and to formally document teaching development activities. You'll work closely with a consultant in the Graduate Studies Office, typically in a five-stage process:

**Initial interview.** At this meeting, you can help the consultant understand the content and cognitive level of your course and work with him/her to design a personalized plan for documenting your teaching.

**Student feedback and observation: Data collection.** The consultant will collect data about your teaching by observing you teach and/or administering the Teaching Analysis by Students (TABS), a student survey that addresses your relative teaching strengths and development needs.

**Individualized consultation: Data review and analysis.** You and the consultant will review the

collected data. Collaboratively, you'll identify your strengths and development needs.

**Planning and implementing changes.** The consultant will help you identify three or four improvement goals and can help you design and implement strategies to meet these objectives.

**Evaluation and documentation.** You and the consultant will evaluate the success of the process. The consultant will prepare a formal letter of documentation describing your teaching development efforts; provide you with a copy of the letter for your academic portfolio; and return all confidential materials generated in the TDP process.

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

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

To learn more about the teaching documentation program, contact Dr. Richard Lombardo, [rlombardo2@unl.edu](mailto:rlombardo2@unl.edu) (472-5334).

# Professional Development Network

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

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## TWENTY STEPS TO WRITING A RESEARCH ARTICLE

Beth A. Fischer and Michael J. Zigmond, *Survival Skills and Ethics Program, University of Pittsburgh*

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THE PROCESS OF MOVING FROM IDEA to published manuscript can be a daunting one. Here we break that process into a series of steps designed make this essential task more manageable. Our list has been modified and expanded from a list provided by the Council of Biological Editors, 1968. If 20 steps are too many to manage, focus on the 13 steps that we have marked with an asterisk (\*) – these cannot be skipped!

**1. Determine the authors.** When designing a research project, we recommend preparing an initial list and order of authors. Such a list authors should be based on established guidelines and should make explicit the estimated contribution of each individual to the project. We recommend that every research group establish and make known to its members the criteria for authorship on papers resulting from the work to be conducted. In so doing, the group may wish to make use of existing guidelines; see our essay on “Components of a Research Article.”

A list of authors will ensure that all individuals to be involved in the project understand at the outset whether or not they can expect to be an author and, if so, what their contribution is to be. It should be viewed as a tentative list, as the final version should reflect actual contributions to the work. (Also, there may be more than one list as it might be anticipated that more than one paper will derive from a given project.)

**2. Start writing before the experiments are complete.** Start writing while you are still doing the experiments. Writing often evokes new ideas: you may realize that there are additional experiments to run or additional controls that you need to add. If you wait until you are done in the lab, have dismantled the equipment, and possibly moved on to another position, you will not have the opportunity to test these ideas.

**3. Decide it is time to publish.** It is time to publish when your findings represent a complete story (or at

least a complete chapter), one that will make a significant contribution to the scientific literature. Simply collecting a given amount of data is not adequate.

**4. Draft a title & abstract.** Drafting a working title and an abstract helps define the contents of the paper, identifying which experiments you will publish in this paper, and which studies you will save for inclusion in another paper. (See our *Components of a Research Article* on the preparation of these two items.)

**\*5. (Re)examine the list of authors.** When you have now determined which experiments will be included in this paper you must select the authors and the order in which they will appear. If you have followed our advice to this point, you already have such a list. Reevaluate it based on the contributions that were made to those experiments and the additional contributions that will be made through the preparation of the manuscript. If a list already exists, make adjustments to ensure compliance with your guidelines. Of course, any changes should be done with caution and tact.

**6. Determine the basic format.** There are three basic formats for peer-reviewed research articles:

- **Full-length research articles:** These articles contain a comprehensive investigation of the subject matter and are viewed as the standard format. It uses the “IMRAD” format: Introduction, Methods, Results and Discussion. (See “Components of a Research Article.”)
- **Short (or brief) communications:** While not as comprehensive in scope as full-length research articles, these papers also make a significant contribution to the literature. Their length will be set by the journal but is usually 3500 words or less and will contain up to 12 tables and figures. Unlike full papers, methods, results, and discussions may be combined into a single section.
- **Rapid communications:** These articles quickly disseminate particularly “hot” findings, usually in

a brief communication format. Articles that have immediate implications for public health would be appropriate for such a format, as might findings in a highly competitive and quickly moving field.

**7. Select the journal.** There are several factors to consider when choosing a journal. It is unlikely that one journal will have all the features you are looking for, so you may have to compromise. However, there is one essential feature you should not compromise on – *manuscripts must be peer reviewed for publication if they are to be considered research articles.*

**Language:** English has become the dominant form for international scientific communication. Thus, if you are interested in communicating your results widely to the international scientific community, then it is essential to publish in English. If, on the other hand, you wish to communicate to a more localized community (e.g., physicians in a particular geographical area), you might choose a journal that permits another language.

**Focus:** What type of research does the journal publish? Is its focus broad or narrow? Which disciplines are represented? What is the journal's orientation – for example, is it clinical or basic, theoretical or applied?

**Indexing:** Is the journal indexed in the major electronic databases such as Medline, Biological Abstracts, Chemical Abstracts, or Current Contents?

**Availability:** Is the journal broadly available? Is there an online version of the journal? Are papers provided in pdf format?

**Reputation:** Although it can be rather subjective, there are several ways to gauge the reputation of a journal. Ask colleagues which journals they respect. Look at recent articles and judge their importance. Check the members of the editorial board and determine if they are leaders in their fields. Determine the journal's impact factor (an annual measure of the extent to which articles in a given journal are cited. How selective is the journal in accepting papers for publication? Note, however, these ratings can be artificially inflated in journals that publish review articles, which tend to be cited more than research articles. See [www.isinet.com](http://www.isinet.com)). Try to find out the acceptance rate of the journal.

**Format:** Do you like the appearance of published articles – the format, typeface, and style used in

citing references? If relevant, does the journal publish short and/or rapid communications?

**Figures:** Do figures published in the journal have the resolution that you need?

**Time to Print:** Using the “date submitted” and a “date accepted” that are published on the article, along with the date of the issue, you can estimate the length of the review process as well as the time from acceptance to publication in print.

**Charges:** Some journals bill the author for page charges, a cost per final printed page. Most journals have a separate charge for color plates. This may be as much as \$1000 per color plate. Many journals will waive page charges if this presents a financial hardship for the author; color plate charges are less readily waived and would at least require evidence that the color is essential to the presentation of the data (e.g., to show a double-labeled cell).

Once you decide on a journal, obtain and read that journal's instructions to authors. This document describes the format for your article and provides information on how to submit your manuscript. You can usually obtain a copy of the journal's instructions to authors on its Web site or in the first issue of a new volume.

**8. Stock the sections of your paper.** As you think about your paper, store relevant material in folders marked *Introduction, Methods, Results, and Discussion*. This will save time and avoid frustration when the writing begins. Stored items might include figures, references, and ideas.

**\*9. Construct the tables, figures, and legends.** Yes, create figures and tables *before* the writing begins! The entire paper should be organized around the data you will present. By preparing the tables and figures (and their legends and appropriate statistical analyses), you will be certain of your results before you worry too much about their interpretation. You also may be able to determine if you have all the data you need. Note: except under unusual circumstance, *you may not include any data that you have already published.* (See “Components of a Research Paper.”)

**\*10. Outline the paper.** An outline is like a road map. An outline details how you will get from here to there, and helps ensure that you take the most direct and logical route. *Do not start writing without it!* If you have coauthors, you may wish to get feedback from them before you proceed to the actual

writing phase. And if you have “stocked” your sections (Step 8), those files should be useful here and in the writing that follows.

**\*11. Write the first draft.** Write the first draft of the entire manuscript. If you are writing with coauthors, you may wish to assign different aspects of the manuscript to different authors. This can save time, allow more individuals to feel that they are making substantive contributions to the writing process, and ensure the best use of expertise. However, it also can lead to a mixture of styles. Thus, if you take this approach, be certain that the final product is carefully edited to provide a single “voice.”

“Components of a Research Article” discusses what goes into each section of the manuscript. For a more extensive presentation of this and many other aspects of preparing a paper, see Day (1998). At this point, do not worry about it being intelligible. That comes later.

Some people recommend that you begin your writing with the Introduction and continue through in order each section of the paper. This can help ensure flow. However, others suggest that you start wherever you wish – anything to get rid of that blank screen or piece of paper. Whatever your approach, heed the advice of Charles Sides (1991): “If you try to write and edit at the same time, you will do neither well.” And because editing is often a lot easier than writing, push through this step as quickly as possible. If you are taking much more than two full days, you have probably paused to edit!

**\*12. Revise the manuscript.** This step involves three major tasks, each to be carried out in the order given:

***Make major alterations.*** Fill in gaps, correct flaws in logic, restructure the document to present the material in the most logical order.

***Polish the style.*** Refine the text, then correct grammar and spelling.

***Format the document.*** Make your manuscript attractive and easy to read. It is important to do the tasks in the stated order. Otherwise, you may find yourself spending a lot of time revising material that you later delete.

**\*13. Check the references.** Ensure that the citations are correct and complete. Do one last literature search to make certain that you are up to date. (See

“Components of Research Article” on the matter of reference selection.)

**\*14. Write the final title and abstract.** Many changes are made during the editing process. Make certain that your title and abstract match the final version of your article.

**\*15. Reread the journal's Instructions to Authors.** Review the details of how the manuscript is to be formatted and submitted. Revise where necessary

**\*16. Prepare the final illustrations.** Ensure that your tables, figures, and figure legends are complete, clear, self-contained, and in the format required by the journal. Do not allow *any* chance for misunderstanding.

**\*17. Get feedback on your manuscript and then revise your manuscript again.** Getting feedback is one of the most important things that you can do to improve your article. First, be sure your co-authors have had a chance to read and comment on the draft. Then, when it is ready, give the manuscript to some colleagues. Indicate when you would like to receive their comments, and what levels of information you would like (e.g., comments on the science, logic, language, and/or style). After you get their comments, revise your manuscript to address their concerns.

Do not submit your manuscript until you feel it is ready for publication. Once it is accepted, further changes in your manuscript will be difficult and may also be costly.

**\*18. Submit the manuscript to the editor.** Follow the Instructions to Authors to determine what items you need to submit, how to submit them, and to whom you should send them. Note that some journals permit (or even require) a “pre-review,” i.e., a letter indicating the content of the article so that the editors can determine whether they will accept the manuscript for a full review. At this point you may wish to list possible reviewers (or individuals to be avoided). If necessary, contact the editor to be sure that the manuscript was received. And if after a month you have not received a response concerning the acceptability of your manuscript for publication you may wish to contact the editor about this, too.

**\*19. Deal with reviewers' comments.** Most manuscripts are not accepted on the first submission. However, you may well be invited to resubmit a revised manuscript. If you choose to do so, you will need to respond to the reviewer

comments. Do this with tact. Answer every concern of the reviewers, and indicate where the corresponding changes were made in the manuscript if they were, indeed, made. You do not need to make all of the changes that the reviewer recommended, but you do need to provide a convincing rationale for any changes that you did not make. When you resubmit the manuscript, indicate in your cover letter that this is a revised version. An alternative is to submit the manuscript to another journal. However, if you do so, it may still be best to take the reviewer comments into consideration. Even if you feel that the reviewers have misunderstood something in your paper, others might do the same. Of course, if you submit to another journal you probably will need to modify the format. And please note: You may *not* submit your manuscript to more than one journal at a time!

**\*20. Check the proofs.** Once the manuscript is accepted and prepared for print, the publisher will send the corresponding author page proofs of the article. This may be accompanied by a list of queries, such as missing information regarding a reference. The proofs may be sent via e-mail or as hard copy. If there is a chance that you will be away when the proofs arrive, have a plan for making certain that they are received and you are notified. You may only have 24-48 hr to return the proofs. Carefully correct any typos and factual errors. And read the manuscript for clarity – this is your last chance!

However, try to limit changes to editorial queries plus minor modifications. If you think anything more major is required, you must first get permission from the journal editor and be prepared for additional costs and publication delays.

**20+. Celebrate!** As Robert Day says in *How to Write and Publish a Scientific Paper* (1998), “The goal of scientific research is publication....A scientific experiment, no matter how spectacular the results, is not complete until the results are published.” Your experiment – at least one phase of it – is now complete. Enjoy the moment!

### Selected Bibliography

For a more complete set of references on writing, see our web site ([www.survival.pitt.edu](http://www.survival.pitt.edu)).

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## TRANSFERABLE SKILLS

IN HER ARTICLE [Transferring Your Skills to a Non-Academic Setting](#) in the *Chronicle of Higher Education*, Margaret Newhouse, cautions against falling into the trap of believing that if you are trained for the professoriate, you have no skills of interest to anyone in the real world.

If you're looking for a non-academic career, however, consider how to capitalize on the skills you've developed as a graduate student – studying and mastering course content, setting up laboratory experiments and conducting research, preparing lectures and teaching classes, or writing a dissertation, papers and articles.

As a first step, list all the skills and character attributes you developed as an academic-in-training. As a starting point, use the following list of abilities

that were brainstormed by participants in a 2006 UNL Graduate Studies workshop on *Identifying Your Transferable Skills*, conducted by Dr. Rebecca Bryant of the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign.

- critically evaluating, analyzing and synthesizing information
- organizing large amounts of information logically
- working as a member of a team
- working independently
- communicating in writing and speaking
- interviewing
- reporting
- adapting presentations to the needs of a listening audience
- using media in presentations
- managing time

- mastering computer programs
- designing documents

Many of these skills no doubt reflect your own abilities; consider how they might be relevant to the types of jobs you're seeking and use them in your resume and job application letters.

Think also in terms of underlying skills you've gained through work and other experiences. For example, if you are a teacher you've mastered the ability to explain difficult concepts, create effective written or oral presentations, motivate students and evaluate performance. The process of writing a dissertation requires managerial skills to create and carry out a vision, locate and organize resources, manage time – not to mention all the research ability, writing skills and subject matter expertise involved.

Newhouse says, “Fundamentally, you want to think in terms of transferable skills – skills that can be generalized and are valuable in many jobs and settings.” Have any of your experiences prepared you to manage budgets, supervise others, manage public relations, cope with deadline pressure, negotiate, speak, write, organize, interview or teach?

Katharine Hansen, writing for the online career counseling site [Quintessential Careers](#), points out what should be obvious: always portray your skills as applicable to the job you seek. A recent article published online by the [UC Davis Internship and Career Center](#) identifies these as the ten most sought-after skills identified by employers:

- communications skills (listening, verbal, written)
- analytical/research skills
- computer/technical literacy

- flexibility/adaptability/managing multiple priorities
- interpersonal abilities
- leadership/management skills
- multicultural sensitivity/awareness
- planning/organizing
- problem-solving/reasoning/creativity
- teamwork

To know what skills to emphasize, you will have to research the company at which you seek employment and the particular job you're applying for. The more you understand the culture and vocabulary of the field you want to enter, the more effectively you can translate your experience into its terms.

A word of caution, though: don't downplay your degree. Instead highlight the skills acquired through your work on the Ph.D. that indicate maturity. You can scarcely go wrong by emphasizing the skills that virtually all employers are looking for, such as teamwork, communications, interpersonal and leadership skills.

### Sources

Ken Barnes (Jan.5, 2009) Skills Most Sought After by Employers. UC-Davis Internship and Career Center <http://iccweb.ucdavis.edu/LAB/articles/Skills.htm>

Katherine Hansen (n.d.) Strategic Portrayal of Transferable Job Skills Is a Vital Job-Search Technique. Quintessential Careers. [http://www.quintcareers.com/transferable\\_skills\\_technique.html](http://www.quintcareers.com/transferable_skills_technique.html)

Margaret Newhouse (Dec. 4, 1998) Transferring Your Skills to a Non-academic Setting. *The Chronicle of Higher Education*. <http://chronicle.com/article/Transferring-Your-Skills-to-a/46430>

## 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

# 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. If you are interested in receiving these announcements, you can subscribe to the listserv by sending an e-mail to Nathan Meier at [nmeier2@unl.edu](mailto:nmeier2@unl.edu). Funding announcements archives also are available at <http://research.unl.edu/sp1/oldfa.shtml>.

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## UNK ASSISTANTSHIP

DR. V. K. BOKEN AT THE UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA-KEARNEY is seeking to hire a graduate student for his project involving estimating evapotranspiration using weather and satellite data. The assistantship requires

20 hours per week at a competitive hourly rate for at least six months. U.S. citizenship is required. Interested graduate students are welcome to contact Dr. Boken at [bokenv1@unk.edu](mailto:bokenv1@unk.edu).

## AMERICAN SOCIETY FOR ENGINEERING EDUCATION NATIONAL DEFENSE SCIENCE AND ENGINEERING GRADUATE FELLOWSHIP

The NDSEG fellowship is a highly competitive, portable fellowship awarded to U.S. citizens and nationals who are at or near the beginning of their graduate studies in science or engineering in one of the 15 supported disciplines. NDSEG confers high honors upon its recipients, and allows them to attend whichever U.S. institution they choose.

**Deadline:** 1/4/10

**Award amount:** NDSEG fellowships last for three years and pay for full tuition and all mandatory fees, a monthly stipend, and up to \$1,000 a year in medical insurance

[http://ndseg.asee.org/about\\_ndseg](http://ndseg.asee.org/about_ndseg)

## THE GETTY FOUNDATION

GETTY GRADUATE INTERNSHIPS are offered for students of all nationalities who intend to pursue careers in fields related to the visual arts. Training and work experience are available in areas such as curatorial, education, conservation, research, information management, public programs, and grantmaking.

**Deadline:** 12/15/09

**Award Amount:** \$17,400 for eight months and \$26,000 for twelve months, including health benefits,

[http://www.getty.edu/foundation/funding/leaders/current/grad\\_internships.html](http://www.getty.edu/foundation/funding/leaders/current/grad_internships.html)

## DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY COMPUTATIONAL SCIENCE GRADUATE FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM

FUNDED BY THE DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY'S Office of Science and National Nuclear Security Administration, the DOE CSGF provides outstanding benefits and opportunities to students pursuing a Ph.D. in scientific or engineering disciplines with an emphasis in high-performance computing. Students in their first or second year of graduate study in the physical, engineering, computer, mathematical, or life sciences are eligible to apply. Additional requirements are described at the Web site listed.

**Deadline:** 01/14/2010

**Award amount:** yearly stipend of \$32,400; tuition and fees paid during the appointment period; \$1,000 annual academic allowance for various expenses incurred while doing research or activities directly related to the professional development of the fellow; upon request, matching funds of up to \$2,475 for computer support.

<http://www2.krellinst.org/csgf/eligibility.shtml>

## AMERICAN WATER WORKS ASSOCIATION

THE AMERICAN WATER WORKS ASSOCIATION offers a number of fellowship and scholarships for master's and/or doctoral students.

**Award Amounts:** vary by program

[www.awwa.org/Membership/Content.cfm?ItemNumber=3501&navItemNumber=13974](http://www.awwa.org/Membership/Content.cfm?ItemNumber=3501&navItemNumber=13974)

**Deadline:** Jan. 15 annually

## THE JOHN F. KENNEDY CENTER FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS

BETTY CARTER'S JAZZ AHEAD, a weeklong music residency program for outstanding, emerging jazz artists in their mid-teens and twenties, brings them together under the tutelage of experienced artist-instructors who coach and counsel them, helping to

polish their performance, composing, and arranging skills.

**Deadline:** 11/20/09

[www.kennedy-center.org/programs/jazz/jazzahead/](http://www.kennedy-center.org/programs/jazz/jazzahead/)

## THE HARRY FRANK GUGGENHEIM FOUNDATION

THE GUGGENHEIM FOUNDATION annually awards ten or more Ph.D. dissertation fellowships to graduate students working in any of the natural and social sciences and the humanities and welcomes proposals that promise to increase understanding of the causes, manifestations, and control of violence, aggression, and dominance.

**Deadline:** 02/01/10

**Award Amount:** \$15,000

[www.hfg.org/df/guidelines.htm](http://www.hfg.org/df/guidelines.htm)

## Announcements

*News of note for graduate students*

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### CURRENT GRADUATE STUDENT FELLOWSHIP COMPETITION

THE OFFICE OF GRADUATE STUDIES holds an annual competition for current graduate students who may apply for fellowship assistance for the next academic year. Awards range from the Presidential and Fling Fellowships (full funding, tuition remission, health insurance and some fees for one year) to smaller fellowships. (See names of the 2009 graduate student fellowship recipients on page 17 of this newsletter.)

The current student fellowship application will be available online Dec. 9 on the [Graduate Studies Web site](#). Application deadline is Feb. 3, 2010.

Students must submit an application, an academic goal statement and vita, and also must provide two letters of recommendation from faculty members.

This is a highly competitive process, in which each student application is ranked by faculty members on the UNL Fellowship Committee. Last year, 259 students submitted applications, and 35 students were awarded fellowships. Out of those 35 awards, four students received the Presidential Fellowship and five students received the Fling Fellowship. Visit the [Graduate Studies Web site](#) for information about how to apply.

### HEALTH INSURANCE BENEFIT FOR GRADUATE ASSISTANTS

IF YOU ARE GOING TO BE A NEW OR CONTINUING graduate assistant for the spring semester, please be reminded that graduate assistants are automatically enrolled in the health insurance benefit. If you already have health insurance and need to waive the benefit, please be sure to use the most current online form to waive the insurance for the coming spring and summer semesters by February 1, 2010.

The printable PDF of the form becomes available on the [University Health Center Web page](#) within the

UNL Health Option paragraph 45 days before the deadline. The form can be printed and mailed to UHC at P.O. Box 880618, Lincoln, NE 68588-0618; or completed and attached to an e-mail message to [bheiserman1@unl.edu](mailto:bheiserman1@unl.edu); or faxed to 472-7432.

You can view [Frequently Asked Questions](#) about student insurance and find health center information and contact information at the Health Center Web site.

## STUDENT ACCOUNTS INFORMATION

THE UNL GRADUATE STUDENT ASSOCIATION worked with the Office of Student Accounts to create more flexibility for graduate assistants. The director of student accounts and his staff will now allow graduate assistants to defer student account payments for spring until March 10. The following language will appear on graduate assistants' billing notices: "As a graduate

assistant, you may defer payment, without penalty, until March 10, 2010."

If you have any questions about billing information, contact Jane Schneider at [jschneid@unlnotes.unl.edu](mailto:jschneid@unlnotes.unl.edu).

## LINCOLN COMMUNITY LEARNING CENTER OPPORTUNITIES

THE LINCOLN COMMUNITY LEARNING CENTER is seeking tutors for a program that offers expanded individualized and small-group instruction to support and enhance learning that occurs during the regular school day. These tutoring services are offered before or after school, as well as during the summer months. Tutors are trained to use curriculum and methods designed to help students have a more productive and successful school career.

These are paid positions, with tutors receiving \$10-\$30 per hour, depending on their education, experience and certification.

Lincoln CLC also accepts after-school volunteers and/or paid club instructors who can work well with students in an environment designed to promote hands-on learning experiences. Academic clubs focus on math, reading, writing, science, while other enrichment clubs introduce students to the arts, theater, music/dance, sports and much more.

For more information about either program, contact Kathie Phillips at [kphilli@lps.org](mailto:kphilli@lps.org), 436-1971, or LeaAnn Johnson at [ljohns2@lps.org](mailto:ljohns2@lps.org), 436-1964.

## Interactions

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

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## GRADUATE STUDENTS HONORED WITH FELLOWSHIP AWARDS

UNL FELLOWSHIP RECIPIENTS WERE RECOGNIZED on Oct. 1 at a reception at the Lied Center held in their honor. These are the recipients of the three highest awards.

**Presidential** fellowship recipients: Deanna Dreher, Mathematics; Julie Iromuanya, English; Douglas Oxley, Political Science; and Jamie Wilkinson, Psychology

**Fling** fellowship recipients: Christopher Campbell, Psychology; Patricio Grassini, Agronomy; Chandreyee Mitra, Biological Sciences; Toni Hill-Menson, Human Sciences; and Dustin Wilgers, Biological Sciences

**Othmer** fellowship recipients: Anna Bellatorre, Sociology; Austin Brockmeier, Computer and Electronics Engineering; Chris Bruening, Mechanical

Engineering; Kellie Buford, History; Kristen Carr, Communication Studies; Jason DeBoer, Natural Resource Sciences; Hunter Flodman, Chemical and Biomolecular Engineering; Allison Fritz, Philosophy; Jamie Hoelscher, Accountancy; Soon Ye Hwang, Educational Studies; Kanika Jain, Biological Sciences; Jeffrey Johnson, Marketing; Irina Kalutskaya, Psychological Studies in Education; Lauren Kreimer, Biochemistry; Marianne Kunkel, English; Ashley Lawson, English; Dong Hyun Lee, Management; Abhishek Majumdar, Computer Science; Andrew Oakland, Psychology; Donald Pan, Biological Sciences; Justin Rousek, Engineering; Lauren Sipe, Mathematics; Alison Van Volkenburgh, Art; Samuel Wortman, Agronomy; Chun Yang, Physics and Astronomy; and Nora Youngs, Mathematics

## GRADUATE STUDENT ASSOCIATION NEWS

THE GRADUATE STUDENT ASSOCIATION is currently working on three initiatives to change graduate life on campus: 1) a family and medical leave initiative for graduate students who are forced to miss prolonged periods of school due to illness or maternity; 2) a proposal to grant key card building access to all graduate students; and 3) a proposal to extend the current graduate assistant fee deferment program to graduate students on fellowship.

Do you have other concerns or things you'd like to see changed? Send us an email at [gsa@unl.edu](mailto:gsa@unl.edu).

**Book Drive.** It's nearing that time of year again for our Better World Books drive. Keep an eye out the last two weeks of the semester for book bins around campus. GSA collects books (of all shapes and sizes) as a fundraiser for several of the events we host. We

ship the books to Better World Books (a nonprofit organization), which then sends them off to various charities.

**NAGPS Benefits.** All graduate students at UNL become members of UNL's Graduate Student Association, which is a member of the National Association of Graduate and Professional Students. As a member of NAGPS, you qualify for several discounts, including the *Chronicle of Higher Education* at only \$1 per issue and insurance discounts. For more information about these benefits, please visit the [NAGPS Web site](#).

For other information about GSA and upcoming social events, visit our Web site often. We update regularly to keep you informed.

## Events

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

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### NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF GRADUATE AND PROFESSIONAL STUDENTS CONFERENCE HOSTED BY UNL NOV. 14-17

UNL's Graduate Student Association is hosting the annual conference of the National Association of Graduate and Professional Students in Lincoln Nov. 14-17. A pre-conference workshop on collaboration is scheduled for Sat., Nov. 14. Events on Sun., Nov. 15, take place at CBA on the UNL campus. Conference sessions on Mon, and Tues., Nov. 16 & 17, are in the

Nebraska Union. Topics to be addressed range from job search advice, to adviser-advisee relationships, to community building and more. Social events also are built into the agenda. For more information on the conference (and how you can get involved), check out the GSA Web site, [www.unl.edu/gsa/](http://www.unl.edu/gsa/) or the NAGPS Web site, [www.nagps.org](http://www.nagps.org).

## 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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### EVENT DATES AND DEADLINES

Nov. 12	<a href="#">Ethics Center Brownbag</a> : "Teaching about Plagiarism."
Nov. 14-18	NAGPS Annual Conference
Dec. 9	Current graduate student fellowship competition application available online
Feb. 3, 2010	Deadline for submission of applications for current graduate student fellowship competition

## DEGREE DEADLINES

Date	Master's degrees to be conferred Dec. 2009	Doctoral degrees to be conferred Dec. 2009
Nov. 5	Submit final exam report (or four weeks prior to oral); Incomplete grades must be removed	
Nov. 12		Application for final exam report; incomplete grades must be removed
Nov. 19	Submit preliminary copy of thesis (or two weeks prior to oral); File results of written comprehensive exam and/or option II paper	
Dec. 3	Final day for oral examination	Final day for oral examination
Dec. 4	Deposit thesis and final examination report form; pay binding fee	Deposit dissertation; dissertation grades submitted; final fees; final forms due
Dec. 18	Commencement	Doctoral hooding and commencement ceremony

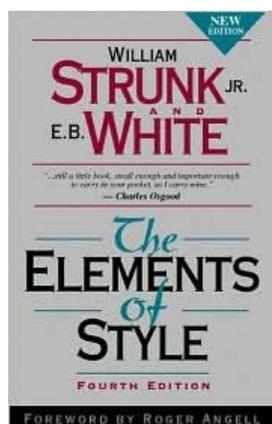
## Readers' Corner

*Interesting reading for graduate students*

### THE ELEMENTS OF STYLE, FOURTH EDITION

*By William Strunk Jr. and E.B. White*

[Longman/Prentice Hall](#)



FEW WRITING MANUALS have withstood the test of time as well as William Strunk Jr. and E.B. White's *The Elements of Style*. Strunk and White focus on elements of usage, the principles of composition, form and commonly misused words and expressions.

*The Elements of Style* was first used in 1919 by Strunk for his composition courses at Cornell University and

published in 1935 for the general public. E.B. White, a former student of Strunk was commissioned by MacMillan for the 1959 and 1972 revisions.

The revisions to the new edition are purposely kept minimal in order to retain the book's unique tone, wit, and charm. A new glossary of the grammatical terms used in the book provides a convenient reference for readers. The discussion of pronoun use is revised to reflect the contemporary concern with sexist language. In addition, there are numerous slight revisions in the book itself which implement this advice. A new foreword by Roger Angell reminds readers that the advice of Strunk & White is as valuable today as when it was first offered.

This book has conveyed the principles of English style to millions of readers. Use the fourth edition of "the little book" to make a big impact with writing.

