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

Graduate Studies

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Graduate Connections

University of Nebraska–Lincoln

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

November 2008

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Navigating Graduate School

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

FEELING LIKE THE LAST PERSON ON EARTH?

HAVE YOU EMERGED FROM YOUR OFFICE recently only to find that everyone is *gone?* Do you sometimes feel that your department colleagues have *just up and vanished?* Are you feeling like the last person on earth?

As a graduate student, you often may find yourself working in solitude – at home alone writing your dissertation or in the library researching a thesis topic. Even if you work in a large laboratory, with many people busy around you, you may find you're the only one working in your specific area. As a scholar, it's normal to spend intellectual time thinking about your research, plotting your design and making sense of your data *on your own.*

But you don't have to be Vincent Price (as in "The Last Person on Earth,"or, more recently, Will Smith in "I Am Legend") to realize that there are things you can do as a graduate student to avoid feeling like you're the last person on earth! Here are some tips:

- From day one, seek contact with fellow students, faculty, department staff and other members of the UNL community.
- Attend departmental morning meetings, seminars, lectures by visiting scholars and seminars held by associated departments.
- Discover your graduate student association and join in its activities, which should give you an opportunity to discuss graduate life with students from other departments.
- Join a special interest group in your area, or set one up if none exists.
- Prepare a poster of your research and display it in a common area in the department.
- Similarly, you could set up your own internet home page. Individual Web pages promote discussion and interaction with others interested in your work.

- Present your work as often as possible. Give departmental seminars, present papers at conferences, publish articles, share ideas with other researchers on electronic bulletin boards, etc.
- Have regular discussions with your faculty adviser.
- Keep a balance in your life, not allowing research, teaching and studies to consume every waking minute. Social and sporting activities matter, too.

The thing to remember is that most people won't realize that you're feeling cut off, unless you tell them. Take the first steps, and you'll quickly develop a network of people with whom you can discuss your work and other interests.

Adapted from *Dealing with Isolation* http://www.uq.edu.au/student-services/linkto/phdwriting/phlink19.html

INTELLECTUAL COMMUNITY: WHAT'S IN IT FOR YOU?

INTELLECTUAL COMMUNITY is one of those concepts that you're not sure how to define but you know it when you see it. Broadly speaking, intellectual community is the general ethos or spirit of an academic department, a "condition" characterized by the activities and events a department intentionally structures around the scholarly interests of the discipline that keep faculty and graduate students engaged.

In their book, *The Formation of Scholars: Rethinking Doctoral Education for the Twenty-First Century,* Walker, Golde, Jones, Bueschel and Hutchings (2008) note that

> *Intellectual community is not simply a matter of ambiance, and it does not happen by accident or by magic. Work is required. Faculty and students (who need not always wait for faculty) must look for and seize opportunities, putting in place whatever activities, strategies, and structures are most conducive to community in their setting. Occasionally this may mean developing new activities, but it may well be that reshaping existing elements and features of the program will bring significant benefits. In any event, the need is not only for ongoing nurturing and attention to the quality of intellectual community; it is for concrete actions that promote such community* (pp. 127-128).

According to the authors, activities that promote intellectual community also can foster graduate students' professional development. In fact, intellectual community can *and should* advance the formation of scholars.

So what kinds of activities promote intellectual community? And just how might these activities contribute to your ongoing development as a scholar? Here's a quick list.

This activity…	provides an opportunity to…
Journal clubs where each member is expected to present and facilitate discussion	Develop valuable group facilitator skills
Mini-conferences that include poster or presentation sessions	Share your scholarship with others while honing your communication/presentation skills
Interdisciplinary research seminars	Cross borders and develop new insights and understandings of the languages
"Open" classrooms where graduate students can see how and what others teach	Expand your repertoire of teaching strategies and models for effective pedagogy
Mentoring undergraduate students	Develop broader teaching skills, including advising and mentoring skills
Mock grant review panels	Learn more about the grant writing process, including how to serve on a review panel

This activity…	provides an opportunity to…
Host invited speakers (picking them up at the airport, giving them a tour of the campus, and accompanying them to dinner)	Expand new knowledge, explore new ideas and possible collaborations, and develop networking skills
Serve on faculty governance committees such as curriculum development, assessment, admissions, and faculty hiring	Experience first-hand faculty roles and responsibilities beyond the lab or classroom

We've used the authors' suggestions to develop the list above, but we're confident that readers have examples from their own experiences as a graduate student at UNL. We invite you to share with us descriptions of the activities you've engaged in that build or strengthen the intellectual community in your department (or on campus). Send your comments to Mandy Bergeron at abergeron2@unl.edu, and we'll publish them in future issues of *Graduate Connections.*

Good Practices in Graduate Education

Advice and strategies to strengthen ethics in graduate education

THE INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD AND YOU: AN INTERVIEW WITH UNL'S RESEARCH COMPLIANCE STAFF

THE SAFETY AND WELL BEING of human research participants is taken very seriously at UNL. The Institutional Review Board, which is overseen by UNL's Office of Research, handles approval of human research. From providing a Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI) course to maintaining knowledge of all federal, state and local regulations related to research, the IRB provides necessary support to UNL's research community. To better understand the purpose of the IRB, we sat down with Dan Vasgird, director of the Office of Research Compliance Services, and Becky Freeman, IRB and Research Compliance Manager, and asked them a few questions.

Could you tell me about what the IRB does for the university?

Dan: The IRB reviews all research projects involving human participants. The mission of the HRPP [human research protections program] is to ensure the protection of humans who choose to participate in research conducted by investigators at UNL and its affiliates. IRB members and staff keep abreast of the latest developments in the ethics and regulation of human participant research and perform thorough and consistent review of research proposals.

What is expected of UNL investigators?

Becky: Investigators are expected to conduct research with the highest degree of thought, technical skill, and care. It is important that investigators adhere to high standards of research ethics, comply with all applicable federal, state, and local laws and regulations, and always consider the rights and welfare of research participants.

Why is this important to research?

Dan: We need to ensure that research conducted at UNL is quality research, carried out with scientific integrity and in an ethical manner. We also need to insure that investigators respect all individuals and groups served by UNL. The IRB makes sure investigators follow federal, state and local regulations for research involving human participants. If the laws are not followed, research at UNL could be halted.

What happens when investigators violate IRB policies?

Dan: Violations of IRB policies are classified as noncompliance, which is defined as the failure to comply with federal regulations and/or IRB requirements. Noncompliance is assessed by the IRB as non-serious, serious or continuing.

Teaching Tip

Socratic Questioning

Socrates taught by asking questions, drawing out answers from his pupils to challenge the completeness and accuracy of their thinking. Here are the six types of questions Socrates posed.

Clarifying concepts. These questions get students to think more about what they are asking or thinking about, prove the concepts behind their argument, and get them to go deeper. (*What exactly does this mean? How does this relate to what we have been talking about? Can you give me an example?*)

Probing assumptions. These questions make students think about the presuppositions and unquestioned beliefs on which they are founding their argument. (*What else could we assume? What would happen if ... ?*)

Probing rationale, reasons and evidence. When students give a rationale for their arguments, dig into that reasoning rather than assuming it is a given. (*Why is that happening? What evidence is there to support what you are saying?*)

Questioning viewpoints and perspectives. Most arguments are given from a particular position. So attack the position. Show that there are other, equally valid, viewpoints. (*Who benefits from this? Why is it better than or different from ...?)*

Probing implications and consequences. The argument a student gives may have logical implications that can be forecast. Do these make sense? Are they desirable? (*How does ... fit with what we learned before?What are the consequences of that assumption?)*

Questioning the question. You also can get reflexive about the whole thing, turning the question on itself. Bounce the ball back into their court. (*Why do you think I asked this question? What does that mean?)*

Non-serious noncompliance might be a one-time failure by a researcher to sign and date the informed consent form. Serious noncompliance could be exemplified by failure to have the participant sign the consent form or conducting a study after IRB approval expiration. Continuing noncompliance is defined as a pattern of noncompliance. A finding of serious and/or continuing noncompliance could lead to consequences such as suspension or termination of the study; suspension of all of the principal investigator's studies pending the completion of an audit; or a recommendation to the Institutional Official that the principal investigator's privilege to conduct research be suspended for a specific period of time or terminated. There are other actions that could be taken depending on the noncompliance issue.

If the research is conducted without IRB approval, it is possible they would have to turn over their data and not be allowed to use any of it. They would have to start their research over which could significantly delay the student's graduation.

What is the relationship between NUgrant and IRB?

Becky: NUgrant is the electronic system that is used to route proposals, submit IRB applications and Disclosure of Interest forms and will be expanded to include applications for research using animals and patents. For IRB matters, the protocol submission and review process is completed via NUgrant. This includes new applications, requests for changes, continuing reviews, and final reports. NUgrant has enabled the Office of Research Responsibility to respond to investigators submitting projects to the IRB in a much more timely and efficient manner.

Who benefits from the training available through IRB? Is it mandatory for investigators on campus?

Becky: CITI training allows UNL to conduct research at a high ethical standard. It is mandatory for all principal investigators, supervising investigators, and key project personnel. This could include undergraduate students, graduate students, faculty, staff, and people not affiliated with UNL. Most people will need to complete the CITI Basic Course for Investigators and Key Personnel. The training provides investigators and key personnel with a background in conducting ethical research and how to protect study participants. The project personnel, the participants, and UNL all benefit from the training.

Your Web site provides an easy to follow flow chart of when students would need an IRB review. What should investigators do when they have additional questions about your services?

Dan: All investigators should contact the office if they have questions. Our main office phone number is 472-6965. They may also send an email to the Human Research Protections Program staff. The names and contact information are listed at http://research.unl.edu/orr/staff.shtml.

Essential Connections

Critical information about the fundamentals of graduate study at UNL

THE NEW—AND IMPROVED—GRADUATE STUDIES WEB SITE

THE OFFICE OF GRADUATE STUDIES WEB SITE (www.unl.edu/gradstudies) has been restructured to better serve students, faculty and staff. Recent changes include savable PDF files for required paperwork (e.g., memoranda of courses and programs of studies), easier access to funding options and the graduate bulletin, and completely redesigned student development pages.

The new student development pages include a concise list of programs and resources available to students through the Office of Graduate Studies as well as a Guide to Success in graduate school. The Guide to Success is modeled after the Taking Charge Framework, which was introduced in the February 2008 edition of *Graduate Connections.* Like the Taking Charge Framework, the Guide to Success outlines the three stages of development for graduate students: getting starting, making progress and advancing beyond, and provides advice and resources for students in each of these stages.

Also new to the student development pages is a listing of quick teaching tips. Currently 30 tips are available, from encouraging classroom discussions among students to grading. If you have a good tip you'd like to share with other teaching assistants, please e-mail your 75-word tip to Mandy Bergeron in the Office of Graduate Studies at abergeron2@unl.edu.

Professional Development Network

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

PREPARING FOR ACADEMIC CONFERENCES

ACADEMIC CONFERENCES are a great way to network with professionals in your field and to present your research. At the stage in your program when you're ready to go on the job market, academic conferences take on a new meaning. This is a time when you will begin setting up interviews and making your first impression with potential colleagues. More than ever, you will need to present yourself as a professional and colleague. Here are a few tips to help you prepare for your trip.

Supporting Materials

Talk to your adviser about appropriate supporting materials to bring with you to your interviews. Prepare your supporting materials well in advance and be sure to bring extra copies. The UNL Writing Center can review your materials and help you make sure they're polished and ready for the big day.

Preparation

Talk to faculty members in your department about the kinds of questions you are likely to hear and how to give a brief talk about your research. Set up a time with other students in your department to practice mock interviews. Be sure to invite faculty and all students, even the ones not on the job market yet, as they will help fill in your audience and provide valuable feedback.

How's Your Connection?

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

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

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

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Scheduling
Scheduling interviews back-to-back may seem like a good, time-efficient idea. However you may run the risk of being late for interviews if your interviews are scheduled too close together.

Research
Before you leave, research the universities you'll be interviewing with. Know about faculty interests and what kinds of courses are offered.

Take Five
Between attending sessions, presenting your research and participating in interviews, you may start to feel overwhelmed. Make plans to meet up with other students during a break in the sessions or at lunch for a chance to relax.

Adapted from *The GSAS Bulletin,* Preparing for Academic Conferences, Harvard, December 2002.

THE ACADEMIC JOB INTERVIEW: QUESTIONS TO HELP YOU PREPARE

IT'S THAT TIME OF YEAR AGAIN! Many of you are planning for an academic job search, writing cover letters, updating your CV, and preparing for the campus interview. While there's no way to know specifically what a given search committee looks for when interviewing a potential faculty colleague, you'll feel more prepared if you can anticipate questions that you're likely to be asked. Generally, there are three areas they'll expect you to address: 1) your research/dissertation; 2) your teaching; and 3) your knowledge of, and interest in, the institution.

Here are some sample questions— organized by topic area—which will get you started. For additional questions, point your browser to the Grad Student Development Guide to Success, Advancing Beyond section of our Web site.

Questions about Research
- Describe your current research. Will you be continuing in this research track? Describe your future research plans.
- How would you involve graduate/undergraduate students in your research?
- What is the cutting edge in your field and how does your work extend it?
- How will you go about revising your dissertation for publication?
- Tell us how your research has influenced your teaching. In what ways have you been able to bring the insights of your research to your courses at the undergraduate level?

Questions about Teaching
- What is your philosophy of teaching?
- What classes could you teach in our program?
- How would you plan a course in ___? What texts would you use? What topics would you cover?
- How would you evaluate student learning?
- How do you bring diversity into your day-to-day teaching?

Questions about Department and Community Involvement
- You've seen our mission statement. How would you see yourself contributing to our mission and campus atmosphere?
- What is your perception of the responsibilities of a full-time faculty member in a University / College? …To the department? …To the division? …To the University / College as a whole?
- How will you fit in as a department member and what kind of contribution will you make to our community?
- Apart from the obvious financial reasons, why would you like to join the Faculty of Y at University X?
- Could you tell us about your long-range plans and commitment to this department?

Questions Employers Can't Ask
Employers can't legally ask you any questions that may lead to discrimination on the basis of race, sex, age, religion, national origin, or disability. However, that doesn't mean you won't be asked to field an illegal question. It's not that someone is intentionally trying to break the law; some

interviewers may ask such questions because they don't know they can't or shouldn't. Whatever the case, your best option is to remain calm and professional.

You're not required to provide any information about your marital or parental status, your ethnic background, or any disabilities you may have. However, some people may choose to reveal this information voluntarily, so they can assess whether a department is family-friendly or ethnically diverse, or if the appropriate accommodations for a disability will be provided.

So, what if you *are* asked an illegal question? For example, "Do you have children?" Here are three possible responses:

1. Answer directly, highlighting positives. "Actually, yes, and luckily my in-laws live here in town and would be happy to take care of them while I work."
2. Avoid the question, highlighting your qualifications. "If you are concerned about my commitment, I can assure you that my research plan is already up and running given the generous five-year grant I just received…."
3. Challenge the question, knowing the risks involved. "Can you tell me how this is relevant to my ability to perform as a faculty member?"

Source: *The Academic Job Search Survival Handbook Especially for Graduate Students,* Career Services Center, University of California, San Diego (career.ucsd.edu/sa/PDFArticles/GAcadJobSearchHandbook.pdf)

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT SERVICES AVAILABLE FROM THE OFFICE OF GRADUATE STUDIES

Fall campus-wide workshops for TAs
Institute for International Teaching Assistants
Preparing Future Faculty Program
Professional development workshops
Professional development courses
Teaching Documentation Program
Assistance gathering student feedback
Individual consultation on teaching, careers, job searches
Advice on creating an academic career portfolio

Interactions

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

GRADUATE STUDENTS TO BE HONORED WITH FELLOWSHIP AWARDS

UNL FELLOWSHIP RECIPIENTS will be recognized on November 6 at a reception at the Lied Center held in their honor. Recipients of the three highest awards include:

Presidential fellowship recipients: Christine Rittenour, Communication Studies; Silvia Saccon, Mathematics; Nan Shao, Chemistry; and Xiaokang Shen, Electrical Engineering

Fling fellowship recipients: Melanie Langford, Biological Sciences; David Madden, English; Brenda Pracheil, Natural Resource Sciences; Katie Walsh, Psychology; Sherry Wang, Educational Psychology; and Twila Wingrove, Psychology

Othmer fellowship recipients: Brandi Berry, Educational Psychology; Jordan Blenner, Law and Psychology; Andrew Brown, Nutrition; Andrew Brueggeman, Biochemistry; Joan Dreiling, Physics and Astronomy; Arit Ghosh, Biological Sciences; Jason Hardin, Mathematics ; Seung Hoon Jang, Management; Sandra Jones, Natural Resource Sciences; Charles Mitchell, Art; Jason Ong, Chemical Engineering; Luis Posadas, Agronomy; Nathan Probasco, History; Timothy Reilly, Marketing; Samuel Saunders, Environmental Engineering; Aaron Sawyer, Theater; Adam Thompson, Philosophy; and Christie Wright, Sociology

WHAT MAKES A COMPETITIVE FELLOWSHIP APPLICATION? ADVICE FROM THE FELLOWSHIP COMMITTEE

See announcement on page 11 regarding the upcoming competition for 2009 UNL graduate fellowships

EACH SPRING, THE OFFICE OF GRADUATE STUDIES offers university fellowships to continuing students through a competitive application process. To maximize your chances of being awarded one of these fellowships, you need to be technically qualified. It's also helpful if you understand the materials you need to submit and the criteria used to evaluate your application.

Applicants submit a personal statement, a curriculum vitae (CV) and two recommendations from faculty members. Many graduate students, however, often are unsure what they should—or should not—include in a personal statement or how to write a CV. What *do* reviewers consider a competitive application? We asked members of the Graduate Studies' Fellowship Committee, "What makes a competitive fellowship application?" and here's what they said.

Statement of Purpose

Faculty who responded to our request noted that the statement of purpose should:

- Present a well-written and grammatically correct statement of purpose. Avoid the use of jargon and/or ambiguous language. Aim for focus and clarity in this analytical statement.
- Outline the graduate student's program of research and/or creative activity.
- Be geared to a specific audience. As you develop the statement of purpose, think about the audience: scholars who represent multiple fields of study in the university. It is necessary to be understood across a broad range of disciplinary and interdisciplinary fields of research.
- Offer information that demonstrates the translation or potential for translation, of the classroom experience into a practical or creative application. If you are, for example, in a science department, the application would be journal articles, meeting abstracts, etc. If you are in the English Department, provide illustration of the creative application of the educational experience (e.g., poems, short stories).
- Be brief and to the point. The purpose of the statement is to briefly introduce you and highlight your goals and vision for your studies, detail important facts about your reasons for studying the topic you've chosen and how you plan to contribute. Give specific, thought-out details in this area.

According to Steve Ramsey, assistant professor of English, "Students have a tendency to tell 'human interest stories' about themselves in their statements. *I first got interested in biology on a field trip to the zoo in 3rd grade; I've always been interested in the brain, and that has inspired me to pursue a career as a psychologist*; *Even as a kid, I was interested in reading.* I think the thought is probably that such statements help to 'humanize' the applicant. In fact, they have precisely the wrong effect, because they make you seem *less* like a professional."

Instead, he encourages students to "think of what it is you're asking the committee to do. You're asking them to give you money, so that you can do research. You are being judged on that research in a way that isn't much different from the way we judge fully professional research." In fact, he notes, the fellowships committee is "really trying to determine if you are doing professional-level research. If you start to tell cutesy stories about field trips, some people automatically conclude that you're not serious (or that you are using cutesy stories to avoid making substantive claims about what you intend to do). When you say, 'I've always been interested in physics,' we wonder why you feel the need to establish that you're interested in the subject. Wouldn't one presume that a person writing an application for graduate fellowship would be 'interested' in the subject?"

Ramsey notes, "All of this is important, because it speaks to a general attitude you have to have toward yourself and your work. You might be a graduate student, but you don't want potential employers (or potential colleagues) to think of you that way. You want them to think of you as a colleague. The best way to achieve that is to start presenting yourself like one right now. And that means not writing graduate-

level grant and fellowship applications as if you were a high school senior writing the personal essay for college. This does not mean that writing about your research should be cold and detached. You can – and should – communicate your excitement and enthusiasm for your work, and sometimes it makes sense to put you and your experiences into that narrative. However, you want to do that as one of your own professors might do it: like a pro who is mainly concerned with communicating the nature of the research and its intended impact."

Choose one or two experiences listed in your CV that connect to the project outlined in the statement of purpose. These experiences may include courses taken or taught, papers written or published, research assistantships in which you played an active role, conferences attended or other scholarly venues that inform the work of the proposal. Explain how this (these) experience(s) will facilitate the growth and development of the next step (s) in your research project/agenda.

Curriculum Vitae

Ed Harvey, associate director of the School of Natural Resources, advises students to "keep the CV short, and highlight your contributions to your discipline – be they papers, talks, inventions, patents, published stories, artworks, creative works, etc. related to your studies. List awards and job related experience to demonstrate how you are progressing in your field and how you are being rewarded or praised for your early contributions. Make these all related to your studies, however. It doesn't matter if you won first place in the FFA hog calling competition in high school." Also, he adds, "don't list basic 'skills' such as 'proficient in WORD, EXCEL, Powerpoint, etc.,' or hobbies such as you like to fish, or read, or travel. These are not really important in this competition. Rather list your outside service activities related to your studies or your profession."

Letters of Recommendation

"Faculty letters of recommendation are critical," notes Roberto Cortinas, assistant professor of entomology, veterinary and biomedical sciences. He encourages applicants to contact faculty members who know their academic and/or professional experience well. "The student should approach the faculty member and ask if the faculty member has the time to write a *good* letter. Additionally, the student should provide a copy of his or her CV/resume to the faculty member to provide the faculty member with a better idea of the student's achievements." Finally, Roberto suggests that it's "helpful to select references who think you walk on water. Make sure the reader knows where you are in your program and give a *brief* vision of where you are headed in your career."

Dr. Harvey also notes that applicants should "be selective in requesting references." Here's why: "Some references have given the candidates low marks, which can ruin an applicant's chances for success." Instead, Dr. Harvey suggests, "Pick a professor in your department you like and trust and someone who really knows your skill set, research or study area, someone who knows you well.

In sum, in the words of one reviewer, "students just need to follow the guidelines already in existence. This is the challenge for application procedures everywhere."

GRADUATE STUDENT ASSOCIATION NEWS

FOR INFORMATION ABOUT UNL's Graduate Student Association, visit the GSA Web site at www.unl.edu/gsa.

Survey

The GSA will distribute a survey late this semester to identify demographic information and key issues for UNL graduate students. This information will help us improve our understanding of the graduate students we represent. Surveys will be e-mailed to a limited number of randomly selected graduate students; if you are selected, please take 10-15 minutes to respond. Your information helps us to better serve all graduate students.

NAGPS Conference

The UNLGSA will be represented at the 22nd Annual National Association of Graduate and Professional Students (NAGPS) national conference in Minneapolis. The conference offers a platform for assemblies of graduate students from around the nation to exchange best practices and to discuss student advocacy issues. While at the conference, the UNLGSA will present a bid to host the 23rd Annual NAGPS National Conference here in Lincoln. Hosting

this conference is a unique opportunity to showcase UNL to graduate students from around the country.

Social Events
The GSA's next social event is the "First Friday" art tour on Nov. 7. Meet at the Sheldon Art Museum between 6 and 7p.m., and then head out for a walking tour of several art galleries located downtown and in the Haymarket. Thanks to all those who attended past social events at Yia Yia's Pizza, Holmes Lake, and the Starlite Lounge.

Legislative Assembly Representatives
See our website for our current list of representatives. If your department does not have a representative, please consider filling this position. Interested persons are asked to send an email to gsa@unl.edu.

Funding Opportunities

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

FORD FOUNDATION DIVERSITY FELLOWSHIPS

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

Deadlines: predoctoral, 11/14/08; dissertation and postdoctoral, 11/28/08

http://www7.nationalacademies.org/FORDfellowships/

NSF GRADUATE FELLOWSHIPS

AWARDED FOR STUDY in mathematical, physical, biological, and social sciences; engineering; science education; and in the history and philosophy of science. For U.S. citizens, nationals, and permanent residents at or near the beginning of graduate study. Three years of support. Intended for students who are in the early stages of their graduate study.

Deadline: 11/3/08-11/12/08
www.nsf.gov/funding/pgm_summ.jsp?pims_id=6201

SYMANTEC CORPORATION GRADUATE FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM

SYMANTEC RESEARCH LABS will award graduate fellowships to outstanding Ph.D. and M.S. students focused on innovative research that has real-world value, in areas of Symantec's business interests in information security, availability, and integrity. The fellowship award will cover 100% of tuition and fees for the recipient's graduate school. A stipend is provided to cover living expenses while in school ($20,000 for 2009-2010).

Deadline: 11/12/08
www.symantec.com/about/careers/college/fellowship.jsp

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: 11/14/08
www.kennedy-center.org/programs/jazz/jazzahead/

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: 12/15/08
www.getty.edu/grants/education/grad_interns.html

AMERICAN WATER WORKS ASSOCIATION

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

Deadline: Jan. 15 annually
www.awwa.org/Membership/Content.cfm?ItemNumber=3501&navItemNumber=13974

AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF UNIVERSITY WOMEN

THE AAUW EDUCATIONAL FOUNDATION, one of the world's largest sources of funding exclusively for graduate women, supports aspiring scholars around the globe, teachers and activists in local communities, women at critical stages of their careers, and those pursuing professions where women are underrepresented. Selected Professions Fellowships are awarded to women who intend to pursue a full-time course of study at accredited U.S. institutions during the fellowship year in one of the designated degree programs where women's participation traditionally has been low. Applicants must be U.S. citizens or permanent residents.

Deadline: 1/10/09
www.aauw.org/education/fga/fellowships_grants/selected.cfm

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: 2/1/09
www.hfg.org/df/guidelines.htm

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

Announcements

News of note for graduate students

CURRENT GRADUATE STUDENT FELLOWSHIP APPLICATION

THE OFFICE OF GRADUATE STUDIES holds a competition each year in which current graduate students may apply for fellowship assistance that will be awarded 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.

The current student fellowship application will be available online Dec. 3 on the Graduate Studies Web

site (www.unl.edu/gradstudies/current/funding-fellowships.shtml).

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, 205 students submitted applications and 39 students were awarded fellowships. Out of those 39 awards, four students received the Presidential Fellowship and six students received the Fling Fellowship. Visit the Graduate Studies Website for information about how to apply.

NEW GRADUATE COMMENCEMENT

AS A RESULT of the increase in the number of students graduating from UNL each semester, changes to the commencement ceremony have become necessary. All graduate students will receive their degrees at the new graduate commencement ceremony on Friday, Dec. 19 at 3:00 p.m. at the Devaney Center. Please visit www.unl.edu/regrec/graduation/ceremony_gd.shtml for details about this change.

LGBTQA READING GROUP

THE LGBTQA READING GROUP meets monthly to read and discuss texts by and about the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer communities. Meetings are held from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. at the LGBTQ Resource Center, 342 Nebraska Union.

The next meeting is Nov. 11 and the theme is Reader's Choice. Select from: Peter Boag, Same-Sex Affairs: Constructing and Controlling Homosexuality in the Pacific Northeast; Environment and Experience: Settlement Culture in Nineteenth Century Oregon; or articles available on Blackboard. The topic for the Dec. 9 meeting is to be announced.

For more information or to be added to the LGBTQA reading group on Blackboard, please contact Pat Tetreault at ptetreault1@unl.edu or 472-1752.

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.

MASTER'S DEGREES TO BE CONFERRED DECEMBER 2008

Nov 6	Submit final exam form (or four weeks prior to oral)
Nov 21	Incomplete grades must be removed; submit preliminary copy of thesis (or two weeks prior to oral)
Nov 28	File results of written comprehensive exam and/or option II paper
Dec 4	Final day for oral examination
Dec 5	Deposit thesis and final examination report form; pay binding fee
Dec 19	Commencement

DOCTORAL DEGREES TO BE CONFERRED DECEMBER 2008

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

Take Note: We've updated our website to highlight the resources that are important to you! Go to Current Students at www.unl.edu/gradstudies/current/

TEN SIMPLE RULES FOR MAKING GOOD ORAL PRESENTATIONS

CLEAR AND LOGICAL DELIVERY of your ideas and scientific results is an important component of a successful scientific career. Presentations encourage broader dissemination of your work and highlight work that may not receive attention in written form. Dr. Philip E. Bourne is a professor in the Department of Pharmacology, University of California San Diego, La Jolla, California. This article condenses his excellent list of rules for making a good oral presentation.

1: Talk to the Audience

Know your audience – their backgrounds and knowledge level of the material you are presenting and what they are hoping to get out of the presentation. Deliver what the audience wants to hear.

2: Less is More

Your knowledge of the subject is best expressed through a clear and concise presentation that is provocative and leads to a dialog during the question-and-answer session when the audience becomes active participants. At that point, your knowledge of the material will likely become clear.

3: Talk Only When You Have Something to Say

Remember the audience's time is precious and should not be abused by presentation of uninteresting preliminary material.

4: Make the Take-Home Message Persistent

A good rule of thumb is this: if you ask a member of the audience a week later about your presentation, he or she should be able to remember three points. If these are the key points you were trying to get across, you have done a good job. If they can remember any three points, but not the key points, then your emphasis was wrong. It is obvious what it means if they cannot recall three points!

5: Be Logical

Think of the presentation as a story. There is a logical flow—a clear beginning, middle, and an end. You set the stage (beginning), you tell the story (middle), and you have a big finish (the end) where the take-home message is clearly understood.

6: Treat the Floor as a Stage

Presentations should be entertaining, but do not overdo it and do know your limits. If you are not humorous by nature, do not try and be humorous. If you are not good at telling anecdotes, do not try and tell anecdotes, and so on. A good entertainer will captivate the audience and improve his or chances of following Rule 4.

7: Practice and Time Your Presentation

The more you practice, the less likely you will be to go off on tangents. The more presentations you give, the better you are going to get. An important talk should not be given for the first time to an audience of peers. You should have delivered it to your research collaborators who will be kinder and gentler but still point out obvious discrepancies. Even more important, when you give the presentation, stick to what you practice.

8: Use Visuals Sparingly but Effectively

If you have more than one visual for each minute you are talking, you have too many and you will run over time. Obviously some visuals are quick, others take time to get the message across. Avoid reading the visual unless you wish to emphasize the point explicitly. The visual should support what you are saying either for emphasis or with data to prove the verbal point. Finally, do not overload the visual. Make the points few and clear.

9: Review Audio and/or Video of Your Presentations

There is nothing more effective than listening to, or listening to and viewing, a presentation you have made. Seeing what is wrong is easy, correcting it the next time around is not. Work hard on breaking bad habits; it is important.

10: Provide Appropriate Acknowledgments

It is often appropriate to acknowledge people at the beginning or at the point of their contribution so that their contributions are very clear.

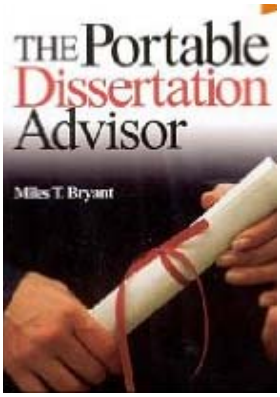
As a final word of caution: even if you follow the Ten Simple Rules, the outcome of a presentation is not always guaranteed. Audience–presenter dynamics are hard to predict. Sometimes you are sure a presentation will go well, and afterward you feel it did not go well. Other times you dread what the audience will think, and you come away pleased as punch. Such is life.

Readers' Corner

Interesting reading for graduate students

THE PORTABLE DISSERTATION ADVISOR

Corwin Press, 2004
Miles Bryant



AS A FACULTY MEMBER in the Department of Educational Administration at UNL, Dr. Miles Bryant is familiar with the challenges nontraditional graduate students face as they try to complete a dissertation via distance or part-time. As a result of his work advising distance students and teaching a course on the construction of a dissertation, Dr. Bryant has created *The Portable Dissertation Advisor,* an easy-to-use, comprehensive guide to completing a dissertation.

While written with distance students in mind, all doctoral students can benefit from the information provided by Dr. Bryant. In sections devised to follow the conventional structure of a dissertation, Bryant organizes the book to help you locate vital information quickly and efficiently and includes practical advice in several areas, such as:

- Finding a topic, a theory and a research method
- Outlining a proposal
- Organizing and reporting your data
- Interacting with and developing a positive relationship with your advisor
- Creating a dissertation support group, plus an appendix listing activities for a support group

The Portable Dissertation Advisor offers sage advice on navigating the dissertation process and includes information on contacting leaders in your field about your research, staying healthy and getting published. Appendices about studies on writing a dissertation and an assessment instrument for evaluating your study complete this thorough work .