

# Graduate Studies Service-Learning, Professional Development, and Interprofessional Education Badge Program Guide

Instructions, examples, and FAQs for the badge program  
to gain credit for your co-curricular achievements

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# 1. Introduction

Graduate students expressed a desire to obtain formal credit for co-curricular learning including service learning, professional development activities, and interprofessional education events. With the Service Learning, Professional Development, and Interprofessional Education Badge Program, graduate students can document time spent in important activities that advance their careers outside of the laboratory or classroom. UNMC offers four levels of recognition (bronze through platinum), with each increasing level requiring more service learning, professional development activities, or interprofessional education events. To receive badging credit for service learning, professional development, interprofessional education, or other co-curricular activity that include a service-learning, professional development, and/or interprofessional education component, students must complete an online survey and submit a reflection. Activities must be documented within two months of the activity to receive credit.

Students completing the minimum requirements to obtain a bronze, silver, or gold level badge receive the award at graduation. Prior to graduation, students who believe they are eligible for the platinum badge should apply for the award by contacting the Assistant Dean for Graduate Studies. Students will be awarded with a bronze, silver, gold, or platinum badge based on their achievements that can be included on the CV and will be acknowledged at graduation.

## What is Service-Learning?

“A method in which students learn and develop through active participation in thoughtfully organized service that is conducted and meets the needs of a community and is coordinated with an institute of higher education and with the community; helps to foster civic responsibility and is integrated into and enhances academic curriculum of the students and includes structured time for the students to reflect on the service experience.”

-National and Community Service Trust Act of 1993

## What is Interprofessional Education?

“Interprofessional education occurs when two or more professional learn about, from, and with each other to enable effective collaboration and improve health care outcomes.”

-The World Health Organization Framework for Action on Interprofessional Education and Collaborative Practice (2010)

## What is Professional Development?

Professional development can be defined as co-curricular activities including seminars and webinars, workshops, panels, and other events, activities, or learning opportunities that advance an individual’s knowledge, qualities, skills, and/or competencies that contribute to his/her/their professional success. For graduate students, this includes any co-curricular activity that supports success in graduate school as well, and includes activities focused on a wide range of transferrable skills and career development activities. Co-curricular activities are activities, programs, and learning experiences that complement, in some way or another, what graduate students are learning in their programs, course work, and research experiences. Please see the FAQ section for a list of types of activities that fit into this category.

### Levels of Achievement

**Bronze:** 50 hours

**Silver:** 100 hours

**Gold:** 150 hours

**Platinum:** 200 hours PLUS one of the following:

- Service for at least one year as a president or vice president of a recognized student organization at UNMC.
- Exceptional contribution to the student community such as development of a new program or starting a new club or organization at UNMC.

Platinum badges require review and are awarded on a case-by-case basis.

## 2. What kind of activities and events can qualify for badging?

### Q. What type of events/activities qualify for badging?

A. There are many different types of activities and events that can qualify for badging credit. Some examples of categories of activities as well specific activities that can qualify for badging include:

Career Exploration and Planning - participates in career-focused Lunch and Learn events or webinars, events, or learnings in Beyond the Professoriate, including sessions on career options, creating a LinkedIn profile, developing a resume, creating a teaching portfolio, meeting with a mentor to get feedback on resume or other career planning documents, mock interviews, professional networking events, internships, etc.

Community Service - provides services that benefit the community as a whole or a particular group in our community. Includes advocating for and/or informing about community needs to help solve a problem, make a difference, created positive impact.

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion - participates in or coordinates a meeting or event focused on cultural understanding or support for international students, an affinity group meeting, or other DEI-related event.

Leadership - holds a leadership position at the department, program, or institutional level, such as students' rep at department/program level, GSA executive committee role, etc.

Other Professional Development - attends a workshop or event relevant to professional development and/or transferrable skills such as organizational skills, communication skills, well-being, etc., and not focused on career exploration/planning. Includes thesis/dissertation boot camp and fellowship workshops.

Planning/administration - plans and/or administers programs or events, including time spent implementing initiatives and events.

Peer Mentoring - formally serves as a peer mentor (including in PAWS, IGPBS peer mentoring, or Office of Global Engagement international student ambassador).

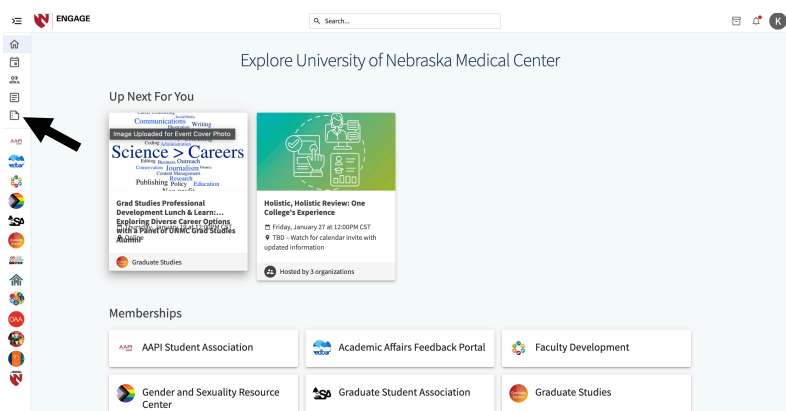
Teaching - Includes classroom teaching, supplemental instruction, or tutoring that is *not required as part of the student's graduate program, employment, or stipend support*. Also includes training other students or new personnel in a research environment. **For teaching that falls into the research training category, a maximum of 1 hr per week of teaching can be claimed.** Thus, work with a summer student for 10 week would be reflected as 10 hours of badge credit.

If you are unsure if an event qualifies for credit in the badge program, contact Dr. Karen Gould ([kagould@unmc.edu](mailto:kagould@unmc.edu)).

## 3. Instructions for submitting a badge program form

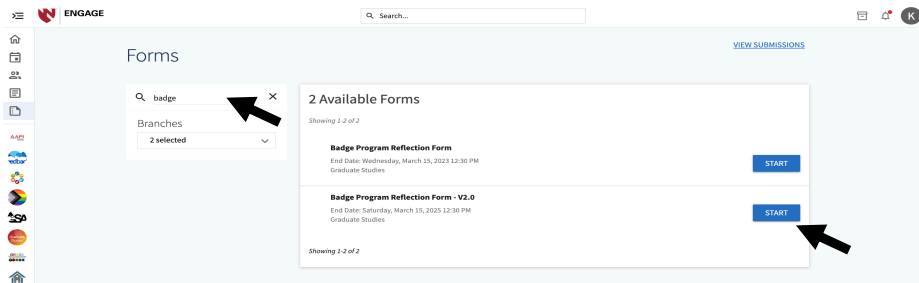
The Badge Program can be accessed in Engage <https://unmc.campuslabs.com/engage/>

Once you log into Engage using your UNMC credentials, click on "Forms" icon indicated by the arrow in the upper left-hand corner in the screenshot below.

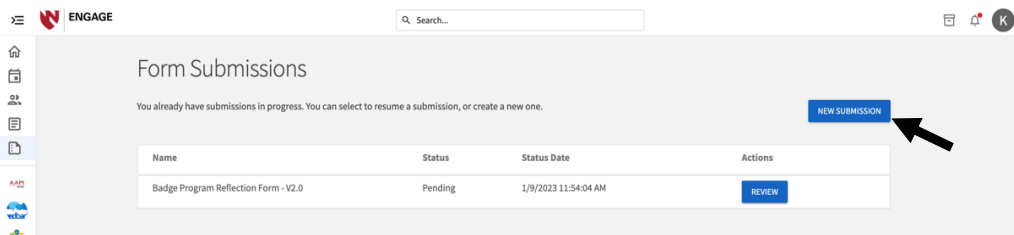


Once you click on the Forms icon, you will see a list of available forms. If you cannot find the new badge

reflection form (Badge Reflection Program Form V2.0), then simply type “badge” into the search box, and that should bring the form to the top. To start a new form submission, click start as shown below.



After clicking Start, you will see the screen below. Click “New Submission” to begin.



In the initial part of the badge program submission form, you will be asked a series of questions including questions about the nature of the activity/event, who sponsored the activity/events, and the number of hours involved.

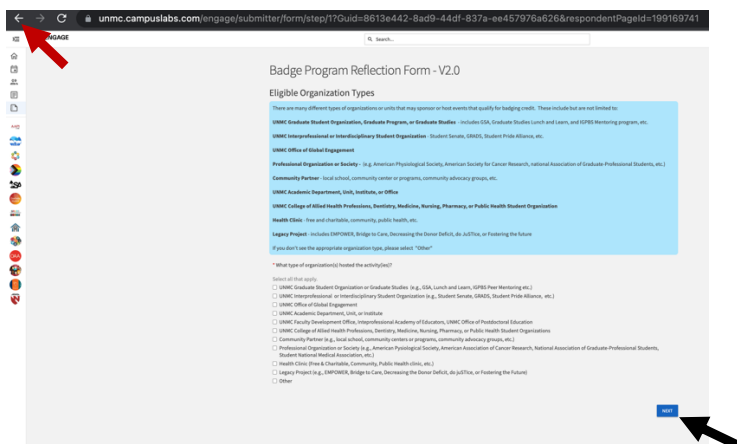
If the type of activity/event or organization sponsoring the activity/event is not as one of the pre-populated responses, listed, simply select the “other” option, and enter the name of the event or organization.

When recording hours, please round to the nearest half hour.

The final section of the badge program submission form is the written reflection portion of the form. You may type your reflection in the box provided or copy and paste your reflection into the box from another word processor. Detailed instructions for writing the reflection section are below.

When you have completed all required elements of the form, click “Submit” to submit the reflection for credit. You will be taken to the “My Submissions” tab, and the form you just submitted will be listed, with the completion/submission date and the status of “Pending”

To advance through the form, click “Next” and to go back to a previous section, click the back arrow.



## 4. Writing your reflection

The reflection is broken up into three short essay answer questions. Screenshots of the three reflection questions and the instructions are included below. For each question, there are sub-questions that you can use to outline your reflection (where appropriate) to ensure that you address some of the potentially important elements of the reflection questions. The instructions also include instructions for calculating the required length of each section of the reflection.

Writing reflections can be the most intimidating part of the program. Remember, there are no right and wrong “answers” for reflections. Their focus is on what you learned from your experience, so the only reason a reflection for a suitable activity will not be accepted upon review is if your responses are not sufficiently self-reflective and/or does not address the items outlined in the instructions.

Instructions are provided in the application on what to include in your reflection. See page 9 for example reflections.

### Question 1

**1. WHAT HAPPENED?** *An objective report of what happened.*  
Briefly, and without judgement or interpretation, summarize the facts and event(s) of the service/interprofessional activity or presentation:

- What happened (event or activity) or what was presented/discussed (presentation or meeting)
- What issue was being addressed or population/community served?

For unique hours of activity, the length of this section can be determined using the formula:  $50 \times$  the number of hours, up to a maximum of 500 words (50 words for each UNIQUE hour of activity, up to a maximum of 500 words). A unique hour of activity refers to an individual, one hour event such as a lunch and learn or a GSA-sponsored cultural event. Thus, if you list two different 1 hour lunch and learn sessions (2 hours of unique, discontinuous activity), then write ~100 words total (~50 for each hour).

For non-unique hours of activity, the reflection length can be determined using the formula:  $(50 \times \text{the number of hours})/2$ , up to a maximum of 250 words. Non-unique activity hours refer to a single event that is more than 1 hour long (non-unique, continuous) or multiple, separate activities that are related to a single role or responsibility (non-unique, discontinuous). Thus, if you attend a four hour workshop or attend 4 hour-long meetings in your role as student representative in your program, the write ~100 words.

These formulas provide general guidelines for what is expected in terms of length. However, the most important consideration for writing your reflection is not the length but your focus on a critical reflection of your experience.

\* Reflection on **WHAT HAPPENED?** (*Objective report of what happened.*)

Type of cut/past your reflection narrative here

### Question 2

**SO WHAT?** *What did you learn? What difference did this experience make?*  
Discuss your feelings, ideas, and analysis of this learning experience. Reflect on the meaning or importance of the activity or content to you and/or the community (including everything from the UNMC graduate studies community, to the broader UNMC community, to our community in Omaha, Nebraska, and beyond).

- Did you learn a new skill, clarify an interest, better understand a different perspective?
- Did anything surprise you about the experience?
- What strong feelings or thoughts did this experience provoke?
- What did you like/dislike about the experience?
- How was your actual experience different from what you expected? What struck you about that? How was this significant?
- What experiences/perspectives impact the way you view the situation/experience?

- Community
  - How did the activity or event address a need in the community?
  - How, specifically, has the community benefited?
  - What did you learn about this community and its people?
  - What might impact how the people in this community view or experience the activity/event?

For unique hours of activity, the length of this section can be determined using the formula:  $100 \times$  the number of hours, up to a maximum of 1000 words (100 words for each UNIQUE hour of activity, up to a maximum of 1000 words). A unique hour of activity refers to an individual, one hour event such as a lunch and learn or a GSA-sponsored cultural event. Thus, if you list two different 1 hour lunch and learn sessions (2 hours of unique, discontinuous activity), then write ~200 words total (~100 for each hour).

For non-unique hours of activity, the reflection length can be determined using the formula:  $(100 \times \text{the number of hours})/2$ , up to a maximum of 500 words. Non-unique activity hours refer to a single event that is more than 1 hour long (non-unique, continuous) or multiple, separate activities that are related to a single role or responsibility (non-unique, discontinuous). Thus, if you attend a four hour workshop or attend 4 hour-long meetings in your role as student representative in your program, the write ~200 words.

These formulas provide general guidelines for what is expected in terms of length. However, the most important consideration for writing your reflection is not the length but your focus on a critical reflection of your experience.

\* Reflection on **SO WHAT?** (*What did you learn? What difference did this experience make?*)

Type of cut/past your reflection narrative here

### Question 3

**NOW WHAT? How will you think or act in the future as a result of this experience?**  
Discuss how will you apply what you learned as you move forward. Consider broader implications of the experience as you apply your learnings. Be aware to strike balance between realistic, reachable goals and openness to spontaneity and change.

- What learning occurred for you in this experience? How can you apply this learning?
- What will you start doing/stop doing, or be doing differently as a result of your learning?
- If you could engage in this activity again, what would you do differently?
- What would you like to learn more about related to this activity, event, or issue?
- How do you intend to follow up on the areas in which you desire more learning?
- What information or learnings can you share with your peers or community partners?

For unique hours of activity, the length of this section can be determined using the formula: 100 X the number of hours, up to a maximum of 1000 words (100 words for each UNIQUE hour of activity, up to a maximum of 1000 words). A unique hour of activity refers to an individual, one hour event such as a lunch and learn or a GSA-sponsored cultural event. Thus, if you list two different 1 hour lunch and learn sessions (2 hours of unique, discontinuous activity), then write ~200 words total (~100 for each hour).

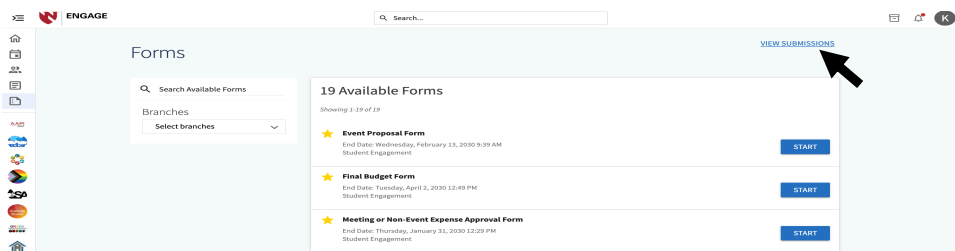
For non-unique hours of activity, the reflection length can be determined using the formula: (100 X the number of hours)/2, up to a maximum of 500 words. Non-unique activity hours refer to a single event that is more than 1 hour long (non-unique, continuous) or multiple, separate activities that are related to a single role or responsibility (non-unique, discontinuous). Thus, if you attend a four hour workshop or attend 4 hour-long meetings in your role as student representative in your program, the write ~200 words.

These formulas provide general guidelines for what is expected in terms of length. However, the most important consideration for writing your reflection is not the length but your focus on a critical reflection of your experience.

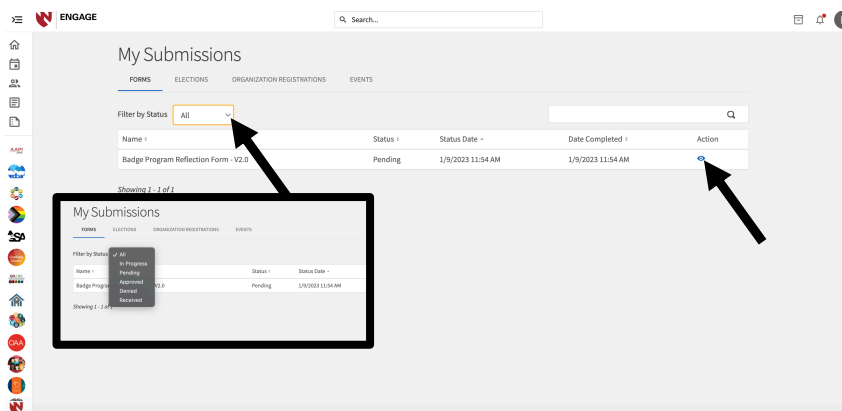
\* Reflection on **NOW WHAT?** (How will you think or act in the future as a result of this experience?)

Type of cut/past your reflection narrative here

Should you want to view your submissions and/or track your hours, click on the Forms icon button (see page 4), and then click on the “View Submission” Tab as shown below.



This will take you to the below page. If you have a long list of submissions, you can click on the “Filter by Status” drop down box, which provides the options shown in the inset box below. To view an individual submission, click on the “eye” icon under the Action column. You will be able to view the content of your submission, including the reflection. If you want to count your hours, you will have to open each submission. The number of hours recorded in at the beginning of each submission.



## 5. Frequently Asked Questions

**Q. My organization/event isn't listed in the application. Can I still get credit toward the badges by participating in my event?**

**A.** Possibly, yes. If the event or organization is not explicitly listed on the application, it could still count (it would be too much to list all the possible activities students can receive credit from). However, the criteria for an event to count toward credit are that:

1. The event/activity includes aspects of service learning, professional development, and/or interprofessional education.
2. The activity/event is officially sanctioned by UNMC, a UNMC-sponsored organization, or other officially recognized external organization.
3. Participation can be verified upon request.

If none of the categories of organizations or activity types provided seems to apply, please select "other"

**Q. Can I get credit for attending seminars?**

**A.** Yes and no. A critical component of service-learning, professional development, and interprofessional education is voluntary participation. If an event is mandatory for your department, program, etc., that activity **cannot** count toward the badge program. However, attending seminars where attendance is not compulsory (such as professional development webinars or special seminars) **does** count toward the program.

**Q. What does a "UNIQUE" hour of activity mean? What about a continuous versus a discontinuous activity? How are these related?**

A **unique hour of activity** refers to an individual, one hour event such as a lunch and learn or a GSA-sponsored cultural event. Unique activities are, by definition, **discontinuous** because each unique event is independent. Attending two separate lunch and learn events would thus represent two **unique, discontinuous** hours of activity because the topics of those events would be different, and the two events were separated in time.

**Non-unique activity hours** refer to a single event that is more than 1 hour long (**non-unique, continuous**) or multiple, separate activities that are related to a single role or responsibility (**non-unique, discontinuous**). Attending a single 2-hour workshop would represent two **non-unique, continuous** because it was a single, 2 hour-long event. If you serve as a member of a committee or leadership team, and have regular meetings or activities associated with that role (e.g., 4 one-hour meetings per month), then those 4 hours would represent a **non-unique, discontinuous activity** because the events reflect the same leadership activity but were separated in time.

**Q. How do I figure out how approximately how long the reflection should be?**

**A.** Detailed instructions are provided in the form, but in brief, for each unique hour of activity, we would expect a reflection of ~250 words. For unique activity hours of activity, the general expectation for the length of the reflection should be determined using the formula:  $250 \times \text{the number of hours}$ , up to a maximum of 2500 words. Thus, if you list two different 1-hour lunch and learn sessions (2 hours of unique, discontinuous activity), we would expect a reflection of ~500 words total. For non-unique hours of activity (e.g. a 4 hour DEI workshop or 4 one hour GSA executive committee meetings), the general expectation for the length of the reflection should be determined using the formula:  $(250 \times \text{the number of hours})/2$ , up to a maximum of 2500 words. These formulas provide general guidelines for what is expected in terms of length. However, the most important consideration for writing (and reviewing) the reflection is not its length but its focus on a critical reflection of your experience.



**Q. How do I figure out when my reflection is due?**

A. Reflections are due within two months of the event or last experience for that event.

**Q. How many hours of activities can I include in one submission form?**

A. There is no limit to the number of hours that can be submitted on a single form. Please use the formulas above and in the instructions to ensure that the reflections are of the appropriate length for the number of hours and nature of activity submitted.

**Q. I did a lot of activities in the fall of 2022, but I didn't submit things to the badge program because I didn't realize they qualified, or I thought the form was too complicated. Can I still get credit?**

A. Yes. Submit reflections on the activities you participated in between August 2022-December 2022 to gain credit for the activity. Activities before August 2022 cannot be counted for credit. If a program began prior to August 2022 (for example, beginning a GSA officer) and continued through the fall semester, you may count this activity. **Activities completed after December 2022 must be documented within two months of the activity to receive credit.**

## 6. Reflection examples

A good reflection will include at least one of the following

- A critical review of your prior knowledge of the subject, a questioning of your assumptions, and the articulation of new perspectives as a result of the experience.
- The ability to draw clear connections between the experience/activity, your learning, and your professional growth and development.
- A clear articulation of how your perspective of yourself or about a particular issue or challenge has been changed as a result of the experience.

Below are some examples to help you understand the general expectation for the content and level of detail in a reflection.

**Example 1: Leadership and GSA-sponsored DEI/cultural activity**

This example contains portions of a reflection based on the student's work organizing several events that were part of the International Education Week 2022.

**Question 1 (What happened?)** During this year, I helped organize the International Education Week together with the team from the international student organization. The international education week happened from November 12th until November 18th. The two main events which I actively organized were on November 17th (Cultural Expo) and November 18th (International Bingo Night). This event was co-sponsored by the International Student Association (ISA) and the Graduate Student Association (GSA). The cultural expo is one of the main days of the international education week in which students from different countries can set up a table and present some items, food, clothing or pictures from their country and culture. During this expo day, I, as a representative of GSA, organized a so-called "Passport Program". We printed out little passports and the students who came to learn about the different countries, could get stamps for every country they "visited" during that day. The person with the most stamps won a small price (gift card). I designed the passports and organized the prizes. The international Bingo Night was a first-time event that had never occurred before and which I organized mainly by myself. Instead of playing "normal" Bingo with numbers, we played international Bingo with flags instead. It was a very fun event and everyone who came to play along, had an amazing time. Students could get to know the different flags and also win small prizes.

**Question 2. (So what?)** This was one of the first time I independently organized an event (or part of an

event) at UNMC and it was a great experience. I had to work together with several other people or groups (e.g., ISA, Office of Global Engagement, Graduate Studies, etc.) and made the experience that everyone was incredibly helpful and always ready to jump in to help me out. I have organized events before, but never at UNMC, so this was a new experience for me to some extent. I realized that communication is definitely key when organizing events, especially if it is in collaboration with other groups or people. A couple of times, I noticed that – either on my end or someone else’s – communication was a little amiss which made it hard to work something out or make a certain decision. I also learned that everyone has their own way of doing things, their own schedule of working on things (e.g., last minute vs. very early on, weeks before an event). Nothing really went wrong, not at all, but small confusions or misunderstandings always happen so it was definitely a great experience for me to be actively involved in organizing the international education week. I never felt alone if I had any questions or concerns or needed help to book a room, or purchase the gift cards or send out the flyers and emails for the events. The international education week is a big and very important event, it is ISA’s main yearly event. Students from abroad can present their countries and others can learn about it and engage in several activities, e.g., Bingo, Ping-Pong tournaments or language classes. I think it is a great event and will be excited to help organize it again next year.

**Question 3: (Now What?)** The international education week is a big and very important event, it is ISA’s main yearly event. Students from abroad can present their countries and others can learn about it and engage in several activities, e.g., Bingo, Ping-Pong tournaments or language classes. I think it is a great event and will be excited to help organize it again next year. I learned about different people’s preferences in communication and work-style and this is something that will always be useful to me. I will make sure to reach out to other groups or people early enough so that there is enough time before an event to organize something or get something done that requires working together with others. I also learned that expectations from different people are different in regard to what should happen when, and how soon or how late something should be planned and set-up. Again, communication is key here as well and I will make sure that in the future everyone is on the same page when it comes to timelines or schedules.

### **Example 2: Attending Career Development Event**

This example contains portions of a reflection based on the student’s attendance at a Graduate Studies Professional Lunch and Learn focused on career exploration and the job search process.

**Question 1: (What happened?)** The October Professional Development Lunch and Learn - ‘Career Exploration and Navigating the Non-Academic Job Search’ was presented by Erin Omar, the assistant director of the Career and professional development at UNL. The purpose of these professional development lunch and learn seminars is to prepare students for potential post graduate school careers. This presentation in particular focused on providing us a method for new ways of thinking about job searching. The presenter wanted us to take away from her presentation the ability to think and assess for ourselves what we want out of a career.

**Question 2: (So what?)** As someone who is just starting my graduate school experience, I feel it is very important to gain as much knowledge about the various post graduate school careers I may be presented with as possible. Last month’s professional development lunch and learn was more academia centered, which I currently have an interest in. However, this isn’t set in stone, and I want to keep an open mind about future career options. Therefore, it was beneficial to be able to listen to this presentation on non-Academic job searching, so I can see how that process would work as well. The topic of job search is certainly intimidating, at least it always has seemed that way for me. Listening to Erin Omar’s method of breaking down the job search into four main steps: discover, research, execute, and grow, it was easy to see how many people could skip straight to the “execute” step. However, through her presentation she was able to explain the importance of the discover and research steps in future job satisfaction.

**Question 3: (Now what?)** As a result of listening to this presentation, I will definitely devote more time and energy to the discover and research steps of job searching. She described ‘discover’ as what you want and need out of a job, and how it is about more than just the work itself. It is also important to connect your life view and work view to find the best balance/connection for you. Through her presentation, I realized that’s what I’m trying to do right now. I’m attempting to gain as much information as possible and determine what I like and

need out of my career path. The hope is if I start doing this now, by the time I begin job searching I will already have a solid understanding of the “discover” step. I previously mentioned I was looking to pursue some form of teaching. Therefore, as part of my graduate school experience, I will want to have many teaching experiences. While this will help me determine if this is truly something I want as part of my future career, I believe it is also important to investigate the non-Academic job sector to ensure I can get the most out of my post-graduate career. This will be assessed as I step into the “research” step of job searching. Here, I will engage with my developed network to find out what potential careers could work for me. There are plenty of non-Academic jobs which involve mentoring or teaching in another form, which could potentially fulfill the teaching I desire to be part of my future career. This is something I will need to assess carefully during my time in the UNMC graduate program to ensure my future career is something that will meet my desired lifestyle. Overall, this presentation gave me a lot to think about, and it showed me how important it is to take the time to truly discover what it is you want out of a career, because knowing that will give you the best opportunity for job and life satisfaction. One topic which I hope will be addressed in future lunch and learn presentations would be potential non-Academic career options. I know today’s presentation was more focused on the steps to determine your goals for a career, and she did present a few websites to assist our search, including [myidp.sciencecareers.org/](http://myidp.sciencecareers.org/) and Bureau of Labor Statistics, which I fully intend to look into. However, perhaps a discussion panel, like the September lunch and learn, on the non-Academic and industry career options would also be very beneficial.

### **Example 3: Leadership and GSA-sponsored community service activity**

This example contains portions of a reflection based on the student’s participation in an event sponsored by the Nebraska Medicine Child Life and Family Development program’s Service at Nebraska. The Child life and Family Development Program provides support services for hospitalized children and their families

**Question 1 (What happened?)** The UNMC Graduate Student Association (GSA) in collaboration with the Child Life Service threw an annual Pediatric Superhero Party (Grad student Play Day) on Wednesday November 9th to help brighten the day of children staying in the UNMC pediatric unit. I had the pleasure of coordinating the events as part of my out-reach chair role at the GSA. I provided the superhero costumes for the volunteers as well as masks and capes for the children, which they enjoyed decorating and coming up with their superhero nicknames. GSA used to throw these types of activities for children in the pediatric unit yearly.

**Question 2 (So What?)** Unfortunately, due to covid-19, GSA had to halt organizing these events for 2 years. We were very enthusiastic when we got the green light from child life services to go back to this tradition and have the opportunity to plan an event for the children. Volunteering at this event gave me insight into the importance of fun activities in developing children’s lives. Seeing their bright grinning faces and the sparkle in their small innocent eyes can bring a smile to my face every time. By leading these activities like slime making, coloring, and decorating, we were able to interact with children and keep them engaged. That allowed me to learn many valuable things from working with children, and I received great insight from them. I learned that it mainly takes patience to work with kids because their attention spans are very short. They get bored with the activity quickly and instead jump to the next one. It is why we had to play with them and engage in the activity with the same passion as they are.

**Question 3 (Now what?)** I can apply what I’ve learned to my future academic or life pursuits because it taught me significant tips necessary in a work force. Many of these are patience, coordinating with institutes and accommodating to their requirements.

### **Example 4: Teaching**

This is part of a reflection submitted by a student who participated as a supplemental instructor for a first-year graduate course through the Academic Success Program in the Division of Student Success.

**Question 1: (What happened?)** This semester (Fall 2020) I was tutoring first semester students for the class IPBS 803 – Fundamentals of Receptors and Cell Signaling. I have spent one evening every week to discuss class material, go over practice questions from the teachers and answer questions and doubts the students might have. Additionally, before each of the three exams, I met with the students more often, up to twice a day

for at least 3-4 days before the exam. Besides that, I was always available for the students to ask me questions via email and/or text.

**Question 2: (So What?).** This experience has been very valuable to me. I have learned a lot, since this was my very first time being a tutor for a class. I learnt how to explain complicated course material in a way that students can understand them. This was particularly valuable for me, as English is not my native language, and it has helped me a lot to improve my language skills in a scientific, explanatory setting. I also value this experience because I have become a mentor for the students as well. Besides covering the course material and discussing course-related questions, I have helped the students in improving their study skills, have worked out schedules for effective studying with them and have been there for them when it came to struggles with the course workload. This has helped the students to become more self-sufficient.

**Question 3: (Now what?)** I would love to be a tutor again in the future. I enjoy working with others, and I enjoy being a mentor for junior students. This has been a great experience for me, and I would love to do it again. In the future, I will now also know better what students need and expect from a tutor since I have already done it this semester. I would do a few things differently, as for example meeting with them in person as opposed to only on zoom (but obviously, this was not possible this year...). I might also consider tutoring in different courses, so I can broaden my experience in this way as well.

### **Example 5: Leadership and GSA-sponsored community service**

This example contains portions of a reflection based on the student's organization of a GSA-sponsored community service activity linked to the work of an environmentally focused non-profit organization called. Keep Omaha Beautiful.

**Question 1: (What happened?)** In an initiative to strengthen ties to the community and increases UNMC graduate student involvement in environmental stewardship. The Graduate Student Association (GSA) at UNMC participated in the Keep Omaha Beautiful (KOB) clean water challenge. As part of KOB's Only Rain Down the Storm Drain program, the Clean Waters Challenge involves caring for storm drain inlets around UNMC and neighboring communities. As the GSA outreach chair, I wanted graduate student to have an opportunity to volunteer for environmental causes that would benefit our community. Therefore, I coordinated this opportunity between the GSA and KOB. KOB volunteers set out with a goal to mark 1,000 storm drains with No Dumping decals and distribute 2,000 educational door hangers to the Omaha community. With the contribution of the GSA-UNMC volunteers, that goal was surpassed with a grand total of 1,338 marked storm drains and 2,082 door hangers distributed in September and October! The Graduate Student Association at UNMC won the water challenge as the most storm drains marked for groups of 10 people or less at 143 total storm drains! Making them the Clean Waters Challenge Champion!

**Question 2: (So what?)** It is hard to explain the feelings that occur when you involve yourself in selfless acts for your community, such as volunteering. Especially when the cause is dear to your heart. I've always been passionate about sustainable environment, and I believe we are all responsible in keeping our ecosystem healthy. KOB is the oldest environmental nonprofit institute in Nebraska and offers great opportunities on engaging and educating the local community about environmental stewardship and the wise use of resources. Volunteering allowed me to become well-rounded individuals who are organized and reliable. Making sure the paperwork is filed probably with the KOB, picking up supplies, and leading volunteers efficiently during outings. I learned many things during this experience. I learned more about water pollution, coordinating with other institutes, and leading a group of volunteers. Reflecting on this experience filled me with joy.

**Question 3: (Now what?)** Going on these outings on Saturday mornings with other volunteers and seeing the enthusiasm to give back, encouraged me to organize more of these initiatives. Finally, we are very happy that we got to play a vital role in empowering Omaha neighbors to help prevent stormwater pollution. The 2022 Clean Waters Challenge was a complete success, and we aim to continue to participate in volunteering initiatives for our community.