

Becoming a Department Chair

A Self-Directed Training Program
for New Chairs

INTERVIEW GUIDE
2nd Edition - 2008

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Overview of the Training Program for New Department Chairs

Transition, rotation, and succession are all words used to describe a central facet of organizational leadership: that leaders follow one another. Despite the frequent occurrence of leader successions in nearly all groups, relatively little research has addressed this phenomenon and few organizations have formal processes in place to facilitate the process (Hart, 1991). This is especially true for new chairs of academic departments. The first few months at the job are likely to be important determinants of long-term effectiveness. For the new department chair and faculty alike, it is a period of both raised expectations and uncertainty. In this situation, the chair's early actions are likely to establish persistent patterns in leadership behaviors, expectations and attitudes of the faculty, and relationships with key personnel outside the department.

To meet this organizational challenge, UNK has developed a structured process to facilitate the training of a new department chair. This process is designed to assist the new chair in: (1) acquiring current and critical information needed for early effectiveness; and (2) establishing productive relationships with faculty, staff, administrators, and key personnel in support services.

The training process contained in this Interview Guide provides the new chair with a self-managed, flexible outline for conducting discussions with individuals at UNK who can serve as informational resources during the transition. The guide, which can be tailored and updated before use, identifies the major issues to explore with each resource-person, i.e., the areas of current problems, programs, and priorities to discuss.

This self-managed approach, besides being appropriate for a new department chair, seems a practical necessity since prior experience makes some areas much more familiar than others. Further, arrangements for the interviews must take existing relationships, individual strengths and weaknesses, and the new chair's work schedule into account. In addition, the new chair should be able to adapt the interview approach to fit his or her interpersonal style.

The guide's influence on establishing productive relationships at the beginning of the chair's term of office is designed to be covert rather than overt. The nature and form of the suggested interview questions are intended to facilitate positive first impressions and productive working relationships. In general, the guide casts the new chair in an active listening role, seeking information that will improve his or her performance, and approaching interviewees as valued resources. Further, specific questions seek inputs for improved cooperation and enhanced effectiveness.

You are free to use the guide however you wish, adding topics about which you need information and deleting topics that you already understand. Also, you may conduct these interviews in the manner and order you find most suitable, and on a timetable that fits your needs. In general, it is suggested that you set up a formal appointment with the individuals who have agreed to discuss these topics with you.

Interview Sources: Who to Contact
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1. Associate Dean of your College (Page 5)		
a. College of Business and Technology	Tim Burkink	8342
b. College of Education	Glen Powell	8502
c. College of Fine Arts and Humanities	Ron Crocker	8386
d. College of Natural and Social Sciences	Bob Rycek	8636
2. The Dean's Secretary (Page 6)		
a. College of Business and Technology	Stacy Darveau	8342
b. College of Education	Shelly Fleck	8502
c. College of Fine Arts and Humanities	Marcia Burman	8521
d. College of Natural and Social Sciences	Dannien Jones	8518
3. Coordinator of Assessment (Page 7)	Jeanne Butler	8006
4. Registrar's Office (Page 8)		
a. Class Production Schedule	Diana Jones	8527
b. FERPA	Kim Schipporeit	8527
c. Data and Reports; SIS & WebSmart	Amy Hammond	8527
d. Transfer Evaluations and Degree Audit	Cyndi Schroeder	8527
e. Registration	Elaine Gokie	8527
5. Academic Advising Office (Page 10)	Mary Daake	8932
6. Admissions Office (Page 11)	Dusty Newton	8702
7. Human Resources (Page 12)		
a. Payroll	Gloria Travis	8182
b. Benefits	Linda Clark	8522
c. Employment	Cheryl Bressington	8388
d. Staff Personnel Issues	John Lakey	8426
e. Faculty Personnel Issues	Kathy Livingston	8204
f. Professional Development	John Lakey	8426
g. Risk Management	John Lakey	8426
8. Equal Opportunity/Affirmative Action (Page 14)	Cheryl Bressington	8388
9. General Studies Director (Page 15)	Daren Snider	8886

10. Chair WI/CD Committee (Page 16)	Trecia Markes	8878
11. Chair, Academic Affairs Committee (page 17)	Marc Albrecht	8545
12. Honors Program Director (Page 18)	Gary Davis	8497
13. Director, Center for Teaching Excellence (Page 19)	Jeanne Butler	8006
14. Finance Office (Page 20)		
a. General Accounting	Jill Purdy	8524
b. Accounts Payable/ Property and Equipment	Joan De Haven	8865
c. Student Accounts	Jolene Berg	8778
d. Grants	Kayla James	8524
15. Division of Student Life (Page 23)		
a. Dean of Student Life	Gail Zeller	8528
b. Career Services	Nancy Kneen	8501
c. Center for Academic Success	David Brandt	8988
d. Counseling Center	LeAnn Obrecht	8248
e. Nebraskan Student Union`	Sharon Pelc	8523
f. Office of Multicultural Affairs	Juan Guzman	8128
g. Residential and Greek Life	Rick Larsen	8519
h. Student Health Services	LeAnn Obrecht	8248
16. Office of Graduate Studies and Research (Page 26)	Kenya Taylor	8843
17. Office of Sponsored Programs (Page 27)	John Falconer	8496
18. Division of Continuing Education (e-Campus) (Page 28)	Gloria Vavricka	8390

**1. Questions to ask the Associate Dean of your College
(Who can either answer the question or direct
you to a source who can.)**



1. What are the expectations/guidelines for department Peer Review committees, the Annual Performance Reviews of faculty, and Rank & Tenure committees?
2. What are the procedures for developing summer, fall and spring course schedules? What are the policies, goals and objectives for prioritizing course offerings? What are the workload policies for faculty at UNK?
3. What are the college's policies related to release time for faculty for scholarly activity?
4. How do I ensure that the department's assessment plan, academic program review and any professional national accreditation assessments are in alignment?
5. How can I talk with who can explain how to read & interpret the monthly SAP "Budget/Expense summary for our department budget, any grant accounts and our department revolving account? How do I get a copy of these forms?
6. What is the process for setting up fees for courses?
7. What do I do with underperforming faculty?
8. How do I develop and foster team cohesion with the faculty in my department?
9. How do I manage a facility that attracts many outside user groups?
10. How do I add a course to the printed class schedule?
11. Why should the goals and objectives of my department be in line with the goals of the college/university?
12. What is the process for requesting permission to hire a new faculty? What are the hiring procedures for conducting a search?
13. How are staff evaluated?
14. What is the proper balance of teaching, research and service with a 50% administrative appointment?
15. What do I need to do to prepare for the 5 year Academic Program Review? What level of detail is needed for a good self-study? When will my department undergo this review? Where do I find the information necessary to complete the APR?
16. Is there a college program for orientation/mentoring of new faculty?

2. Questions to ask your College Dean's Secretary



1. What is my department operating budget?
2. What are the department faculty salaries?
3. How are faculty overloads paid and what are the amounts?
4. How is payment for summer teaching generated and what are the amounts?
5. What are the procedures for department travel approvals, reimbursements, etc?
6. How does the department hire student assistants?
7. What is the difference between work study and regular hourly student workers?
8. What paperwork is required to hire/pay faculty, staff and students?
9. What are the college rank and tenure guidelines and deadlines?
10. What are the deadlines for faculty evaluations/annual reviews, department annual reports, and scholarly productivity reports?
11. How do we hire part-time faculty and what is the rate of pay?

3. Questions to ask the UNK Coordinator of Assessment



1. What is the assessment process/requirements for departments?
2. Where can I find examples of assessment plans and reports for my department and other departments?
3. What types of assessment training are available for me and for my faculty?
4. Is there support for participation in assessment conferences and for doing assessment research?
5. How do I contact the Assessment office and who should I talk to about assessment issues in my department?
6. Does the office of assessment provide support to departments in preparing and evaluating the assessment reports?
7. What impact does the results of the 2008 HLC Accreditation visit have on departments and their assessment processes?

4. Questions to ask at the Registrar's Office



Class Schedule Production (Diana Jones)

1. What is the timeline for producing the fall, spring and summer class schedules?
2. What specific items should I pay particular attention to during the production process?
3. How are changes made in class offerings once the schedule is published?
4. What do I need to know about distance education offerings?
5. How are classrooms assigned?

FERPA (Kim Schipporeit)

1. What is FERPA and how am I responsible for the actions of faculty in my department?
2. What tools are available to help my department adhere to the UNK FERPA policy?
3. What are some situations that are most likely to cause faculty problems with FERPA?

Data and Reports (Amy Hammond)

1. What are standard reports that I can expect to receive from the Registrar's Office?
2. What other types of data are available to my department for APR, assessment?
3. For what and to whom do I direct questions to the Registrar's Office?

WebSMART (Amy Hammond)

4. What new functionality do I have with my WebSMART Chair's account?
5. What should I be aware of when issuing electronic permits to register for courses in my department?

SIS (Amy Hammond)

6. How do I use SIS to manage enrollment in classes?
7. What things should I be aware of when changing/closing course enrollments?
8. How can I use my SIS access to help me during schedule production/planning for future terms?

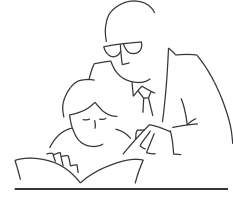
Transfer Evaluations and Degree Audit (Cyndi Schroeder)

1. How is a student's transfer coursework evaluated?
2. With what institutions do we have transfer agreements and how do I access this information?
3. How is Department Chair access to student's records and degree audit different from an advisor's?
4. What is the process for student substitutions?
5. What is Transfer Day and when are they scheduled?
6. What are my responsibilities for Transfer Day as Department Chair?
7. How do Department Chairs complete transfer evaluations for incoming transfer students?

Registration (Elaine Gokie)

1. How do I issue a permit to register for a class?
2. What instructions should I give to the student about the permits?
3. How do I find out the number of permits I have issued?
4. How do I stress to my faculty the importance of making changes to the Correction Rosters and returning them to the Registrars Office?
5. What information should I give to my faculty about Academic Advising?
6. What tools can I use to best manage enrollments in classes during registration?

5. Questions to ask about Academic Advising



1. How are advisors assigned advisees?
2. What is the Department Chair's role in advisor assignment? How can departments ensure that advisor assignments meet department and student needs?
3. What services are available to help with advisor training in the department?
4. How can the departments recruit majors from among deciding students?
5. What is the department chair's role in transfer student orientation?
6. How can Academic Advising help with students who are not successfully performing in their major?
7. What is the P.A.S.S. program?
8. How can Early Warning Referrals help faculty to communicate expectations to students?

6. Questions to ask the Office of Admissions



1. What is the mission and role of the Office of Admissions at UNK?
2. How is the Office of Admissions organized? What is our approach to student recruitment?
3. What are the major recruiting events for which we seek departmental partnership?
4. How should faculty interact with prospective students in selling the "product", including their departmental major and the overall academic experience at UNK?
5. How can my Department help with recruitment efforts

7. Questions to ask in the Office of Human Resources



Payroll (Gloria Travis)

1. How do employees get paid?
 - a. When do they get paid?
 - b. What documents are necessary to generate a payroll payment?
 - c. Who initiates the process of documents to generate payroll payments?
 - d. What is the routing and approval process of payroll documents?
 - e. How do I verify that employees are paid correctly?

Benefits (Linda Clark)

1. Which employees are eligible to participate in the benefit programs?
2. When do employees become eligible to participate in the benefit programs?
3. What documents are needed to set up an employee for benefits?
4. When do employees learn about the benefit programs?
5. Who pays for the University's cost for employee benefits?

Employment (Cheryl Bressington)

1. How is a faculty position filled?
2. How is a staff position filled?
3. What do I need to do to create and fill a short-term temporary position?
4. What are the categories of employees?
5. What types of background checks are completed on employees?

Personnel/Staff Issues (John Lakey)

1. What is the process for employee evaluations?
2. When and how are salary increases given to staff employees?
3. What is the process for disciplinary actions?
4. How are staff employees recognized for their performance?

Personnel/Faculty Issues (Kathy Livingston)

1. If I have concerns regarding a faculty member's performance, where do I go for advice?
2. If I have a faculty member considering phased retirement, where do they start the process?

Professional Development (John Lakey)

3. What kinds of professional development opportunities are available for employees?
4. How does an employee find out about professional development opportunities?
5. What release time is given to employees for professional development?

Risk Management (John Lakey)

6. What type of insurance coverage protects employees and the University in the performance of their job functions?
7. What is the University doing to reduce risk exposures for both the employees and the University?

Questions to ask in the Equal Opportunity/Affirmative Action Office

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) (Cheryl Bressington)

1. Where do I go when a faculty or staff member requests an accommodation for a disability?
2. Where do I go for information when a faculty member has questions regarding a student's accommodation plan?
3. If my department hosts an event that is open to the public, where do I go to find language regarding accommodations to put in the flyer?

Harassment/Discrimination Issues (Cheryl Bressington)

4. Where do I go when a student, staff or faculty member has questions regarding a situation involving harassment or discrimination?
5. If I receive a harassment or discrimination complaint and do not act on it, what can happen to me, the department or the university?
6. Who provides training on harassment and discrimination?

Records Retention (Cheryl Bressington)

7. How long does my department need to maintain records?
8. If my department is ready to destroy records, what do we do?

Dual Career Program (Deb Huryta)

9. If a prospective or new employee has questions/concerns about finding employment for an accompanying partner, where do I go for help?

Ombudsperson (Kurt Siedschlaw)

10. Where do I go to for help to resolve academic or personnel problems when I have tried all other options?

8. Questions to ask the Director of General Studies



1. How does the General Studies Council operate?
 - a. Meeting times
 - b. Personnel
 - c. Subcommittees
2. What are my responsibilities for assessment of GS courses in my department?
3. How does the assessment of GS classes dovetail with the dept APR?
4. What help does the General Studies Office have available for assessment?
5. Where can I find the General Studies course guidelines?
6. What is the approval process for General Studies Courses (GS)?
 - a. How is the approval process related to the College Educational Policy (Academic Affairs) and the Faculty senate Academic Affairs Committees?
 - b. What are the criteria for General Studies courses?
 - c. Once approvals of GS courses have been obtained, what are my responsibilities in ensuring that these courses are offered in a manner that follows the guidelines?
7. What are common problems that my department faces when advising students about General Studies requirements?
 - a. Is there anything programmatically that can be done to resolve the problem?
- b.** What is the procedure to petition the General Studies Director for substitutions in a particular student's program?

8. Questions to ask the Chair of the WI/CD Committee

1. Where can I find the WI, and CD course guidelines?

2. What is the approval process for:
 - a. Writing Intensive Courses (WI)
 - b. Brand new course with brand new instructor
 - c. Existing WI course with new instructor (who has not previously taught WI)
 - d. WI-approved instructor with a new WI course
 - e. Cultural Diversity Courses (CD)

3. What are common problems with WI and CD courses?
 - a. How do we schedule WI and CD courses?

 - b. Once a semester schedule is turned in, is it possible to add WI and/or CD designation to a course?

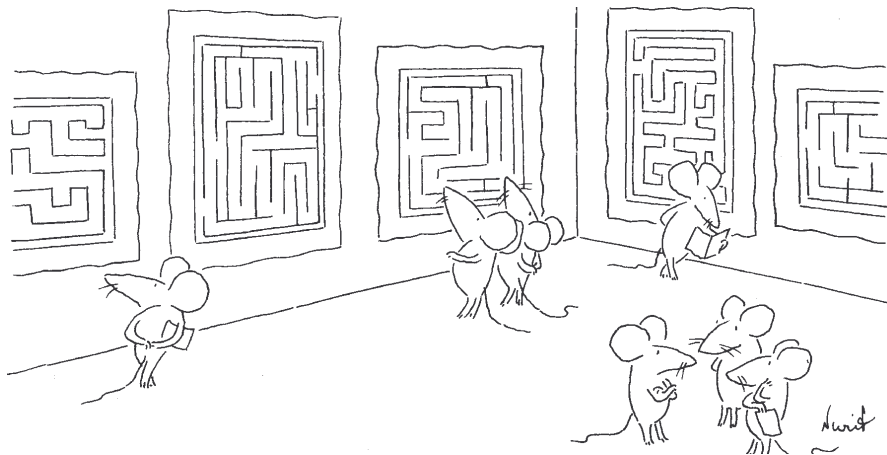
 - c. Once a course has been offered, is it possible to designate it as WI and/or CD?

 - d. How do I keep track of WI and CD courses and instructors?

 - e. Once approvals of GS, WI, and CD courses have been obtained, what are my responsibilities in ensuring that these courses are offered in a manner that follows the guidelines?

9. Questions to ask the Chair of the Senate Academic Affairs Committee

1. What does the Academic Affairs Committee do?
2. How does Faculty Senate Academic Affairs Committee fit into the approval sequence for new courses, course alterations, new programs, and altered programs?
3. What are the institutional rules concerning the maximum size of programs?
4. What are some of the recent issues that the Committee has faced?

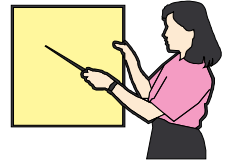


10. Questions to ask the Director of the Honors Program



1. What are the guidelines for admission to the Honors Program both for new recruits and those students already enrolled at UNK?
2. What are the requirements to finish the Honors Program?
3. How do I advise an Honors student?
4. What is the difference between an Honor's Class and an H-Option?
5. What is my responsibility in filling out an H-Option Contract?
6. What are the guidelines and requirements for a "Senior Study" in the Honors Program?
7. What is the size and diversity of the Honors Program?
8. Where is the Honors Program? Who directs the program? What is the purpose of the Honors Program?
9. To whom does the Director of the Honors Program report?
10. Are there scholarships available for Honors students?
11. Is there an Honors Residents Hall? Where? Are Honors students required to live in this one Hall?
12. What is an Honors class?
13. How can classes within my department be selected for Honors status? How many Honors classes are offered each semester.

11. Questions to ask the Center for Teaching Excellence Director



1. What programs and services does the CTE provide to support faculty?
2. What are the results from the CTE survey related to faculty needs for professional development?
3. What types of funding does the CTE provide to faculty to support professional development, research and innovation in teaching?
4. How can I encourage faculty to take part in the CTE activities?
5. Does the CTE provide services to faculty who are not receiving acceptable ratings on their yearly performance reviews?
6. Does the CTE provide services to new faculty?
7. What is the URL for the CTE website, access to the newsletter, etc.

12. Questions to ask Personnel in the Finance Office



General Accounting (Jill Purdy)

1. What accounts am I responsible for and what is the purpose of each?
2. What is the source of funds in each of these accounts and how do unspent funds carry forward between fiscal years?
3. What financial reports can assist me in reviewing the activity in my account and managing my department's budget? How do I access them?
4. What controls should my department have in place to safeguard money collected until it is deposited with the Finance Office (conference registration fees, professional services, or other material or service sales)?
5. When are we required to collect sales tax on department materials or services sold?

Grant Accounting (Kayla James)

see also <http://www.unk.edu/admin/vcbf/policy/4.0/index.php?id=8971>

1. What are the policies and procedures for grants?
2. How many grants does my department have? Who is administering those grants?
3. What is my responsibility for grants within my department?
4. How are indirect costs generated and distributed to departments?
5. What is the process for spending money from our department's Foundation account?

Student Accounts (Jolene Berg)

1. What course fees are currently being charged by my department? To what accounts do the fees get deposited?
2. How do I initiate a new student fee?

Accounts Payable (Joan DeHaven)

1. Where can I find policies and procedures regarding the purchasing and spending process?
2. What is my department's signature/approval policy? What is the University's signature/approval policy?
3. How does our department procurement card work? What types of expenses can be charged on it? How can I review transactions to detect unauthorized spending?
4. What on-line vendors are available to our department? What controls are in place to prevent unauthorized spending?
5. Does the University have any exclusive or preferred vendor contracts? What are the requirements when a purchase is governed by one of these contracts?
6. What steps can I take up front to ensure that non-employees brought in as speakers or presenters get paid expeditiously? What must I do up front to engage the services of a foreign individual?
7. When should an individual be paid as an employee versus an independent contractor?
8. Who authorizes my travel? Does this need to be done before or after my trip?
9. Are there purchases that are prohibited with State funds?
10. Do all purchases fall under the blanket of the University's sales tax exemption?
11. What are the special State of Nebraska policies with regard to the purchase of food and/or the reimbursement of employees' meal expenses?
12. How do I determine whether payments to students for educational assistance are considered qualified scholarships for tax reporting purposes?
13. What types of expenses require special treatment & documentation for tax reporting purposes?

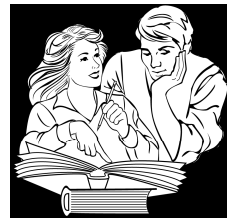
Property & Equipment (Joan DeHaven)

14. What procedures should our department have in place to safeguard equipment and other personal property from being stolen or used for personal benefit?

15. What is the process for disposing of equipment and other personal property that our department no longer needs?

16. Am I responsible for maintaining an inventory of equipment in my department?

13. Questions to ask the Division of Student Life



Dean of Student Life (Gail Zeller)

1. How does a student get notification to his/her instructors that he/she has a family emergency?
2. Who does a faculty member contact if he suspects that a student has violated the Student Code of Conduct?
3. What is expected of me and to whom do I refer a professor who has a concern about a student in their classroom/program.
4. Where do I find Student Code of Conduct, and what is covered.
5. How can student life staff assist in understanding of student development in developing the whole student, not just academically, but as it relates to academic support outside the classroom, personal growth and civic responsibility.

Career Services (Nancy Kneen)

1. What types of Career Development Programs are available on campus?
2. How does UNK work with employers in developing job placement opportunities for our students?

Center for Academic Success (David Brandt)

1. What resources are available for students within the Center for Academic Success?
2. What support and resources are available for faculty within the Center for Academic Success.
3. How are tutors selected and trained at UNK?
4. What kind of academic coaching is available to UNK students and how do they locate information about specific subject areas?
5. How do I refer students who appear to need assistance from the Center for Academic Success?
6. What is a suggested entry for my syllabus regarding accommodations for students with disabilities?

7. What accommodations are available for students with disabilities?
8. What types of services are available for faculty who are working with students with disabilities?
9. How do I arrange to have students take make-up tests?
10. What arrangements are made for those who need accommodations for testing?

Counseling Center (LeAnn Obrecht)

1. How can a faculty member work with the Counseling Center regarding a concern for a student?
2. What types of support groups are available through the Counseling Center?
3. Does the Counseling Center offer programs on various topics?

Nebraskan Student Union (Sharon Pelc)

1. How do you reserve a room in the NE Student Union?
2. How far in advance should space be scheduled in the NE Student Union?
3. How are student government leaders selected?
4. Who are the Student government representatives for our College?
5. How can I make sure that academic student groups in the Department are officially recognized?

Office of Multicultural Affairs (Juan Guzman)

1. What types of diversity programs and multicultural student organizations are available on campus?
2. How are multicultural students recruited to UNK?
3. How can we work with your office to better serve multicultural students?
4. What is the best way for me to promote diversity and multicultural issues?

Residential & Greek Life (Rick Larsen)

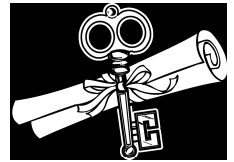
1. How does the residence hall experience affect and support a student's academic endeavors?

2. What are Living/Learning Communities and are faculty involved with this program?
3. If I have a concern about a student who lives in the residence halls who do I contact and what type of information can be released.
4. What does it mean to be the premier undergraduate residential university?
5. What type of housing do students live in?
6. How are the residence halls staffed/supervised? (i.e. What is a Resident Advisor(RA)?, What is a Hall Director (HD), etc.)?
7. What kind of rules & regulations govern the residence halls (i.e. quiet hours, alcohol, drugs, etc.)?
8. Who do I refer a student who may have a problem with a roommate or other members of the floor/hall community.?
9. What kinds of activities and programs happen in the residence halls to form community and connect students with UNK.
10. What are the challenges of the residence halls and what are the plans to correct those?
11. What emergency procedures are in place?
12. What are the myths and stereotypes of Greek students that aren't true.
13. How much does it cost to live on campus for room and board (meals)?
14. Why do freshman students need to live on-campus for their first year?

Student Health Services (LeAnn Obrecht)

1. What services are provided for students at Student Health Services?
2. What types of programs are offered on various health issues?
3. How does a faculty member work with Student Health regarding the health concerns of a student?
4. Who are the Peer Health Educators and what topics do they offer for class presentations?

14. Questions to ask the Dean of Graduate Studies and Research



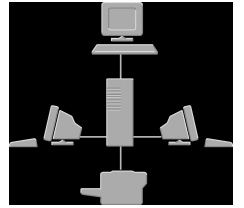
1. What is the process and timeline for appointment to the Graduate Faculty?
2. My department does not have a graduate program. Why is Graduate Faculty membership important in this circumstance?
3. How are modifications made to existing Graduate programs?
4. What is the process for proposing new Graduate programs or new graduate courses?
5. What is the role of the Graduate Program Committee Chair?
6. Where do I find support for student and faculty travel to professional conferences?
7. How might I encourage more student or faculty scholarly activity within the department?
8. How does the department obtain Graduate Assistant and Research Assistant positions?
9. What are the requirements for teaching a graduate-level course?

15. Questions to ask the Director of the Office of Sponsored Programs



1. What is my department's history of external funding?
2. What can your Office do to help us get external funding?
3. How does external funding relate to education and scholarship?
4. What internal resources are available to support faculty research and creative activity?
5. What internal resources are available to support student research and creative activity?
6. Are there ways to incorporate student research into the department's curriculum?

16. Questions to ask eCampus



1. What role does eCampus play when a department is interested in developing an online course or program?
2. What is the process for scheduling an online course?
3. What kind of support services does eCampus provide to the department and to the faculty?
4. Explain the various funding opportunities available from eCampus in the development for distance education courses and/or programs?
5. What training opportunities are available from eCampus? If faculty are interested in teaching an online course, how do they get started?



UNIVERSITY

NEBRASKA

KEARNEY