Dean Camilla Benbow announces the Peabody College Pre-faculty Fellows program.

The Problem:
Peabody PhD candidates/students who are ready to graduate and go on the job market for Research University positions are facing a void in university hiring in the current economic environment. Faculty positions that were open last fall have been pulled off the job market and many universities across the country have frozen faculty hires or are cutting faculty positions. Peabody College has put a lot of resources into mentoring these students for competitive positions, and it is to our and their benefit to have them “ready” to be the strongest candidates when those jobs start opening up.

A Potential Solution:
Peabody College is offering a competitive program for PhD students who have defended their dissertations and anticipate or may not be having success in the current job environment. This would involve their staying as PhD students at Peabody while working on further professional development.

A four-pronged program that would be available for up to 2 years would involve full time effort in the following dimensions:

- Scholarship of teaching: advanced opportunities for substantive teaching responsibilities, including training and support, and work towards a Certificate of Teaching with the Vanderbilt Center for Teaching, completing at least Phase 1 of that program;
- Research apprenticeship: Working closely with a faculty member on that faculty member's program of research on a project that will result in publication within the time frame;
- Systematic advanced methods training, through formal existing coursework or other proposed independent study, that would advance the student’s skills and expertise in their field of research;
- Writing for publication, including a plan for publishing her or his dissertation research and other manuscripts/projects that they have underway.

The goal is to have PhD students who are more competitive when they enter the job market and better situated for a more prestigious offer.

Benefits of Fellowships:

In addition to the benefits of advanced training as described above, the fellows will receive a monthly stipend of $1,500, health insurance, and activity fees. Students must continuously enroll (for zero hours) in the 3990 Dissertation Hours course offered through their department. Their fellowship plan will serve as the basis of judging progress and the grade of Satisfactory or Unsatisfactory for that course. A grade of Satisfactory is needed to remain in the program.
 Eligibility:

Peabody Ph.D. students who are seeking faculty positions at Research Universities nationally are eligible to apply for the fellows program. To start the fellowship, the student must have successfully defended her or his dissertation but not yet been awarded a degree (discussed below). To maintain the fellowship, students must submit a progress report at the beginning of the last month of each semester (December 1, April 1, August 1) and earn grades of Satisfactory on the 3930 courses (registered for zero hours).

Students who have defended their dissertation and not yet used the full amount of their funded period of support in the program should confer with their Department Chair and continue on that funding option. The funding for these fellowships begins after departmental support ends. Note, however, that the training process described for the fellows may also be used by students under other funding mechanisms, with the approval of the faculty member with whom they are working and the Department Chair.

Those who have defended their dissertation proposal may start the application process, in preparation to begin the fellowship after dissertation defense. Note that in order to retain pre-doctoral status, students are expected to complete their dissertation and all changes requested by the committee, then hold the dissertation until they are ready to graduate. At that time, they will file with the Graduate School their dissertation and Intent to Graduate form. Once that takes place, students will be graduating from Vanderbilt at the end of that semester and will no longer be eligible as a pre-doctoral student.

This fellowship is not a way to supplement other job options. Students with funding from other mechanisms (e.g., departmental, research grants) may apply for fellow status only if they have no more than 20 hours of support to allow them the time to participate in all four of the program dimensions.

Application Process:

The fellowship positions are competitive and require an application, the nomination by a faculty member and the Director of Graduate Studies of the department, and approval by Deans Heflinger or Hogge.

The application will address the student’s current status and planned actions towards each of the four components described above, with a specific timeline. In addition, the student will describe her/his current job search activities and plans for the time period. A current CV should accompany the application, as well as a copy of the signed dissertation title page (unless this is pending, in which case a statement by the dissertation committee chair will suffice). While the students may not require support for the entire timeline originally planned, the application may address up to a 12-month timeline with a possible extension.

Applications should be submitted a minimum of 1 month prior to the requested start date. The applications for Deans’ reviews should be submitted April 1 for funding to start in May, July 1 for funding to start in August, and December 1 for funding to start in January. For other funding cycles, an explanation will be needed (e.g., research grant support may not extend throughout a semester).

For more information, contact c.heflinger@vanderbilt.edu