DIRECTOR’S WELCOME

We are excited you are here and so happy you decided to join the Bridge Community. We know you have worked hard to get here and you’re ready to take the next step on your path to a PhD. This experience will challenge you. This experience will frustrate you. But, this experience will uplift you and shape you into a scientist, too. We want you to know that we are here to support you and celebrate you along the way. To do so, we provide a number of resources (see below) designed to assist you in meeting your goals.

Remember: no one makes it alone. We need each other to grow stronger. You have many people in the Bridge Community to seek out as potential mentors, advocates and champions both at Fisk and at Vanderbilt. Please do! To begin, look no further than your incoming cohort. You’re all going through this difficult first year together, and you can offer one another the kind of support that only comes from going through the same difficult thing. Plus, I'm sure they will be excellent at taking you out to celebrate your success!

To be sure, getting your Master’s and preparing for a PhD is a major accomplishment. It will be tougher than you imagine. But, so are you. Each of you has what it takes to see this through. Together we are the Bridge.

RESOURCES AVAILABLE

**Tutoring** - For many courses this will be provided at the beginning of the course. Otherwise, it can be provided on request.

**Technology** - We can purchase laptops and software as needed.

**Conference Travel Support**

**Multiple Mentoring Opportunities**

**Course Counseling**

**Career Planning**

**Professional Development**

**Social Events**

**Writing Advice and Editing**

**Talk Practices**

**Poster Design and Reviews**

**GRE Fees** - We pay for 2 general and 2 physics, if needed

*We encourage you to seek the advice of our talented Bridge faculty, staff and your peers in the Bridge program who are dedicated to nurturing your success. We look forward to getting to know you and to cheering your accomplishments.*
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This document is intended to help you succeed in the Fisk-Vanderbilt Masters-to-PhD Bridge program. Most of the forms and other details can be found in the Student Handbook and on the program website.
MISSION STATEMENT and PROGRAM GOALS

To identify promising, talented individuals who bring a passion for science and who possess the potential to succeed in a science research and teaching career; to prepare these individuals for a successful transition to the PhD in science through caring one-on-one guidance, multiple tiers of mentorship, a challenging scholarly and research-driven environment that fosters personal and professional growth, and a warm, nurturing social network with other students and faculty; to become the nation's top producer of underrepresented minorities earning the PhD in science; and to change entire fields of science toward full inclusion and diversity. In doing so, the Bridge program is promoting in these professions diversity and excellence, as well as a bedrock value for Fisk, for Vanderbilt, and for the nation.

Vision: Become a national model for mentoring STEM graduate students.

Values: Diversity, Passion, Teamwork, Perseverance, Networking
WHO TO GO TO...

CONSTANTINE COCA, Program Coordinator
230 DuBois, Fisk
Office: 615-329-8517
ccoca@fisk.edu

DINA STROUD, PhD
244 DuBois, Fisk
Office: 615-329-8837
dina.m.stroud@vanderbilt.edu

You should come to me whenever you need assistance with your paychecks, insurance, class registration, stipends, tuition, fees, bills, student account discrepancies, internships, conferences, travel, etc. Do not wait until you experience complications; let me help you as soon as you have any difficulties, regardless of their nature. I will try to solve your problems or, at least, will point you in the right direction.

Drop by my office at any time, call me on my office, on my cell phone, or send me an email. Please pay attention to my emails - I will email you a lot, reminding you about different deadlines and events that you will need to participate in, and benefit from. I am always happy to make your day easier, taking the load off your shoulders, so you can concentrate on your academics.

LAUREN CAMPBELL, PhD, Assistant Director
6717 Stevenson, Vanderbilt
Office: 615-343-7081
Fax: 615-343-0449
lauren.e.p.campbell@vanderbilt.edu

You can best reach me by email or office phone. I can help you with:

- Room reservations at Vanderbilt, setting up a study group or tutoring, poster/oral presentation practice, fees/conference registration/travel arrangements/GRE costs/other approved items, filing for reimbursement of approved expenses, engaging in outreach opportunities, organizing social events/guest speakers/professional development seminars, personal and professional mentoring, including navigating work-life balance or grad life in general.

Have a question? Need assistance? Just want to chat? Drop by my office—I’m happy to help in any way I can.

DINA STROUD, PhD, Executive Director
6715 Stevenson, Vanderbilt
Office: 615-343-6783
Fax: 615-343-0449
dina.m.stroud@vanderbilt.edu

My philosophy is that anything that affects your academic life can be my business if you want it to be. Therefore, I am available for a broad range of personal and professional support. Whatever it might be, we will do our best to help. I am here to help you execute your vision for yourself, and find the right opportunities for your scientific and professional development. Come to me with issues about class, research, or if you need career/science mentoring. I can help you prepare for presentations and can review and edit abstracts, manuscripts, and emails. My basic schedule: MWF- Vanderbilt, TR-Fisk. My schedule jumps around due to meetings so please email me first.
BRIDGE STEERING COMMITTEE

The Bridge Steering Committee’s charge is to ensure we are focused on our mission and the fundamental tenets of the program. Those are:

- Identifying students with “unrealized potential”: Selecting promising students on the basis of the usual metrics alone excludes a huge pool of talent. Assessing promise for success then requires alternative measures, involving in situ observation of academic capability, probes of personal traits such as performance character, and direct observation of research skill.

- Facilitating transitions across critical educational junctures through mentor/mentee relationships and faculty-to-faculty handoffs: The most successful handoffs of students occur between mentors engaged in collaborative research, which must be actively developed and choreographed.

- Monitoring the “second derivative” of student performance: Reactive interventions that respond only when student performance drops below some absolute threshold or even when performance is just trending downward may not be agile enough to prevent attrition. Progress must be carefully monitored through layered mentoring networks to notice subtle “inflection points” that signal possible problems.

- Tapping into and connecting students with the broader scientific community: For the ultimate professional development and scientific vitality of students, they must become effectively networked with the broader communities of their discipline(s). Such networking and visibility requires mentoring and orchestration among multiple mentors, ideally connected through collaborative research.

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Dina Stroud, Executive Director
dina.m.stroud@vanderbilt.edu

Student Representatives
Michelle Gomez
Marina Hanna
Jodiene Johnson
CODE OF ETHICS

The Bridge Program expects students and mentors to behave respectfully and professionally both in and outside the academic setting, including cyberspace. Prompt reporting of incidents is highly encouraged.

Because of the uniqueness of the program, students and mentors are held to a high standard and must abide by both the host University Code of Conduct and the Bridge Code of Ethics. Failure to do so will result in a formal warning, probation, or immediate expulsion from the Program, as decided by majority vote of the Bridge Steering Committee.

The Bridge Program will take action if any student or mentor engages in any of the following behaviors:

- Endangering the health or safety of any other person
- Plagiarism of any academic product, from homework to professional papers
- Unauthorized use or intentional destruction of University facilities or property
- Sexual misconduct or other forms of power-based personal violence such as stalking and domestic violence
- Threats of violence or harassment directed towards and individual or group, especially those based on race, religion, color, national or ethnic origin, age, disability, military status, sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression
- Operating a motor vehicle while intoxicated or on drugs
- Theft or misuse of University, Bridge, or personal property
- Forgery of University or Bridge Program signatures or misuse of official University or Program documents
- Conviction of a crime
- Furnishing false information to the University or Bridge Program
- Engaging in illegal activity during Bridge sponsored events

Dismissal from the program does not affect your enrollment status at any institution in which you are matriculated.
PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS and EXPECTATIONS

BRIDGE PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

There are two fundamental components to be considered in good standing in the Bridge Program during the Master’s phase: 1) maintain a 3.0 GPA and 2) demonstrate adequate progress in research. To be fully recommended for a PhD program at Vanderbilt you must also get no lower than a B- in your core courses and take at least one Vanderbilt course with a minimum grade of B.

There are basic Bridge standards for adequate progress in research. Your project should address a knowledge gap or test a clear hypothesis that you can explain to a general scientific audience. The most fundamental expectation is that you will produce publication quality data that could contribute to a manuscript or grant proposal. Publication quality data must be reproducible, contain appropriate controls and be understood by those in your field as presented. There is no requirement that you publish your Master’s work, though this should be goal for all students. Further expectations for research progress are established with your advisor.

Adequate progress in research is not just about the data you produce; it is also based on your development as a scientist. The research rubric is one way to measure your progress. You will review the rubric (page 20) with your advisor at the end of the first and second semesters your first year in the program. The expectation is that you will be in all three categories as you start, that is meeting expectations, approaching expectations and below expectations, but as you move forward there will be a clear progression. At the end of your Master’s you should be fully approaching or meeting expectations.

BRIDGE PROGRAM EXPECTATIONS

PhD Applications: We expect that you will apply to more than one PhD program and we will support you in the planning and application process. You are not required to apply to Vanderbilt. If you do apply to Vanderbilt, you can apply to a maximum of 2 programs, for example, Physics and Interdisciplinary Materials Science.

DGS Meetings: If you apply to Vanderbilt, as part of the application process in late November/early December, you will present to the Director of Graduate Studies of the program(s) to which you are applying. This includes a 5-minute presentation, a discussion of your coursework and test scores, for about 20 minutes total. Attending a practice for this presentation is required.

Monthly Seminars: Once a month, we have professional development seminars. You are required to attend unless you have a genuine conflict. In that case, you should let one of the program administration know that you will not be there.
Research Days: For Fisk students, there is a required Fisk Research Day every April. This is organized by Fisk faculty and instructions will come to your FISK email. We expect that both Fisk and Vanderbilt Bridge students will also participate in the Bridge Research Celebration Day that is held every August. You can reuse your abstract and poster from Fisk Research Day, if appropriate.

Path Planning Meetings: In the Master’s Phase you are required to meet with Dr. Stroud each semester, including the summer, for path planning meetings. In the PhD phase you are expected to meet once a year at minimum. These meetings center on progress toward the milestones described on page 12 and discuss career goals so that we are aligning you with appropriate opportunities. It is important to note that you can schedule a meeting with any of the Bridge Program Administrative Team at any time.

Communication: Email is important and should be treated as such. You should check your email twice a day at minimum. You should answer in 24-48 hours. In particular, program emails that request a response should be dealt with as soon as possible. Second or third requests for a response are discourteous and disrespectful to the sender.

Study Sessions: Some courses have Bridge group study sessions with a session leader. Unless you have an academic conflict, these are required until you test out of them with an exam grade of 85 or above. Many students find them helpful no matter how they are doing in the course.

Master’s Committee Meetings: You are required to have scheduled your first Master’s committee meeting by March 1st. All committees should have at least 3 members and at least one person from Vanderbilt. We will assist in deciding who should serve on your committee.

TIPS FOR SUCCESS

Be present: Attend class, attend journal clubs, seminars, and colloquia at Fisk and Vanderbilt, and generally participate. Remember: you need to become known by the faculty who will evaluate your PhD application.

Work: As a general rule of thumb, you should expect to work 50-60 hours/week as a graduate student. This includes coursework and research.

Background: Take courses that best complement your long-term research interests and that get you known by faculty in your area(s) of interest.

Make Connections: Whether you intend to apply to Vanderbilt or not, we expect you to get to know Vanderbilt faculty and participate in events in your department of interest. These connections will be facilitated by the program but are your responsibility to engage. The goal is to have a solid letter of recommendation from a Vanderbilt faculty mentor.

Also, make connections with your cohort, peers and near-peers. Participate in social and mentoring events.
STUDENT POLICIES

PLACING STUDENTS ON PROBATION
Students should be informed of the necessary requirements for satisfactory coursework and progress in research during orientation. At the end of each semester the student’s advisor and the Bridge Program staff should review to determine if all students are in compliance. If a student does not meet the required GPA, they are put on immediate probation. If a student is not making adequate progress in research, then the research rubric should be reviewed and a formal warning issued from the Bridge Program. A specific time is set for review of the student’s progress and at that time they are placed on probation if they have not improved.

REMOVING STUDENTS FROM THE PROGRAM
Following a defined period of time on probation (typically no more than 1 semester), if the student is not Approaching Research Expectations or has a GPA less than 3.0, will be given a 3-month grace period followed by removal from the program. The Bridge Program can only make a decision for the program itself and not the Fisk Graduate School. The decision to remove a student from the Fisk Program should be made by the Graduate Council.

MEDICAL and PARENTAL LEAVE for FISK BRIDGE STUDENTS
Students may apply for up to 6 weeks of Medical or Parental leave from the Bridge Program, stipend uninterrupted. Written requests require Director of Graduate Studies approval and may need additional documentation, as appropriate. Students should make arrangements, as needed, with their course instructors to make up any missed coursework during the leave period. If period of leave will extend beyond six weeks, students will need to file for a leave of absence according to Fisk policy (see Fisk Graduate Handbook).

LEAVE OF ABSENCE AND APPLICATION FOR READMISSION
In addition to the Fisk and Vanderbilt procedures, a Bridge student wishing to apply for a leave of absence must submit a letter to the directors of the Bridge Program and seek a recommendation from their primary research advisor. A Leave of Absence will be granted for sound educational purposes, health reasons, financial problems, and family responsibilities. Other reasons will require extra justification and in no case a Leave of Absence will exceed one year. Readmission in the program is automatic only if the student left the program with an approved Leave of Absence and in good academic standing.

DISABILITY ACCOMMODATIONS at FISK
If you have a physical or learning disability that requires accommodations at Fisk, you need to make the request through the Academic Excellence and Student Performance (AESP) office at Fisk. Differently-Abled Student Support Services are designed for students who may have special needs for their successful matriculation at Fisk University. Whether the student has received a previous diagnosis or needs an assessment, the DSSS staff ensure that the proper accommodations are provided. The contact person is Angie Ali, aali@fisk.edu and the office is located on the first floor of Dubois Hall.
VACATION POLICY
Graduate students are required to be in residence “full time,” which is defined as a minimum of 40 hours per week. Students are allowed 3 weeks (15 days) of vacation; that includes time taken during spring, fall, and winter break. Summers are your most productive time for research and you want to maximize your efforts during that period. Your advisor should be informed in advance about any vacation time.

REFERENCING THE BRIDGE PROGRAM
On posters, in presentations, or while corresponding with anyone not directly affiliated with the program (including faculty/administrators at Fisk and Vanderbilt), be sure to use the program’s full, official name: Fisk-Vanderbilt Master’s-to-PhD Bridge Program.

Also be sure to list your funding source(s), your advisor should be able to assist in getting the right grant number to reference.

Whenever you present as a student at Fisk in the Master’s phase, you should the Logo of Fisk University and be sure to use Fisk University as your institutional affiliation. Here is the link to the Fisk style guide, https://www.fisk.edu/assets/files/89/styleguide_fisk.pdf.

Vanderbilt style guides can be found here, https://www.vanderbilt.edu/communications/brand/.

TUITION, FEES and FINANCIAL AID (Fisk Graduate Handbook, pg 8)

A graduate student is classified as full-time if enrolled for nine or more credits (See Student Classifications, Fisk Graduate Handbook page 9). A graduate student, whether a master’s candidate, a student in graduate standing, or a conditional graduate student, may be enrolled on a part-time basis only with the permission of the Director of Graduate Studies and approval by the Dean of the Graduate School.

Full graduate tuition is charged for 9-12 hours of graduate level courses (or a combination of undergraduate and graduate level courses). Students enrolled for more than twelve credit hours (overloads) are charged at the current rate of tuition per credit hour for Fisk University.

Financial assistance is available to qualified students through tuition waivers granted by the University and through graduate student stipends/research assistantships funded by various grants and contracts to the University or to Fisk University faculty members.

Students who receive fulltime stipend support are not permitted, based on the mandates of the Federal funding for these stipends, to engage in part-time or any outside work; the basis for the stipend funding is to permit students to focus fully on their learning and research discovery.

Part-time students or students without stipend funding will need to identify a source of living expenses; non-research related work should be reviewed with the thesis advisor and Director of Graduate Studies for the program in which the student is enrolled to make sure that the work schedule allows realistic completion of course or research expectations.
# STUDENT MILESTONES

## MASTER'S PHASE

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<th><strong>Purpose</strong></th>
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<td>Engage Faculty and Prepare for Research</td>
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<td>Establish Committee</td>
<td>Build Scientific Mentoring Network</td>
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<td>Mentor Mixer</td>
<td>Build Personal and Professional Mentoring Network</td>
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**Spring Semester Y1**

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<td>Assess Research Progress</td>
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<td>Self-Assessment/Faculty Engagement</td>
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<td>Aligning Expectations</td>
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<td>Progress to Degree Completion</td>
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<tr>
<td>Preparation for Fellowship and PhD Application</td>
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**Summer Y1**

- GRE Prep and General Test
- Finalize List of PhD Programs
- Summer Internships (if applicable)

**Fall Semester Y2**

- Committee Meeting
- Fellowship Applications
- (Chem only)
- Subject GRE (Physics and Astro Only)
- Present to Vanderbilt DGS
- PhD Applications

**Spring Semester Y2**

- Committee Meeting
- Coursework Completion
- Thesis Preparation

**Summer Y2**

- Committee Meeting (if needed)
- Research Wrap-up
- Thesis Completion by August 15th

**Purpose**

- Professional Development/Funding Acquisition
- Lab Rotation
- Demonstrate Research Capability/Explore Lab Fit
- Preparation for PhD Application
- Secure Transition to PhD
- Secure Transition to PhD
- Present Thesis Progress/Assess Research Progress
- Degree Completion
- Degree Completion
- Review Thesis Progress/Plan for Defense
- Degree Completion
- Deadline for Full Degree Completion
PHD PHASE

The Bridge Program does not end when you start your PhD. You are considered an active Bridge student whether at Vanderbilt or another institution until you graduate. As such, we are here to assist you in your PhD, be it help with fellowship applications, support for conferences attendance, practice quals and job talks, etc. Your Bridge peers and mentors are a valuable resource and are here for you!

Below is a basic PhD timeline. Program requirements and timelines vary greatly among institutions and even by department within a single institution. In general, you can expect to begin your PhD phase by taking courses and completing lab rotations, if required. In those first 2 years you are usually making a deep dive into the literature supporting your work and gaining technical skills. Preliminary and/or qualifying exams are usually during the second or third year and mark the time when you begin to start taking more ownership over the direction of your work. You should plan to apply for fellowships and attend conferences throughout, but especially as you approach completion in years 3-5. In your final year, you can expect to be focused on completing your dissertation and job hunting. When you are the expert, you know it’s time to be moving on!

SAMPLE PHD TIMELINE

Year 1
Coursework/PhD Transition
Rotations (if required)

Year 2
Complete Coursework
Prelims or Quals
Fellowship writing

Year 3
Quals
Fellowship Writing

Year 4
Dissertation Fellowship writing
Conference Attendance

Year 5
Dissertation Writing/Completion
Conference Attendance
Job Hunting
MASTER’S DEGREE CONFERRAL DATES (Fisk Graduate Handbook, pg 17)

Schedule for Completion of Work to Graduate in the MAY Commencement. Specific dates for EACH year are available on the Academic Calendar (available online) AND in the Registrar’s Office.

December: Complete Relevant Sections (A, B) of the Multi-Part Form “Request to Permit Conferring Master of Arts Degree” and submit to Graduate School Office
   A. Student Information (due the semester before graduating)
   B. Academic Information (also known as the ‘graduate school audit’)
March: Research Mentor Approves Thesis before distributing to Committee members.
April: Thesis distributed to Committee at least two weeks prior to the Defense date.
   Submit Form C. Permission to set a Defense Date. The Public Defense MUST OCCUR at Least TEN DAYS prior to the deadline for completion of all requirements for the degree (including submission of a committee-approved and Dean of Graduate Studies reviewed and approved thesis document), in order to permit completion of any corrections to the thesis document identified by the Thesis Committee at the time of the Public Defense. Date required posted by the Registrar each year.
   Receipt obtained from the Dean of the School of Graduate Studies that your thesis is complete and has met all of the requirements of the Graduate School, which is submitted by the Graduate School Dean to the Registrar, as documentation that you have met all of the expectations and requirements for conferring the Master’s Degree.
May: Graduate and, if desired, participate in Commencement Exercises.

For a Recommended timeline for completion of the Thesis Research, Document and Defense of the Thesis and Submission of the Approved Thesis document for AUGUST COMPLETION, please see the Appendix of the Fisk Graduate Handbook (page 63). For students in the Fisk-Vanderbilt Master’s to PhD Bridge Program or for all Master’s candidates who intend to transition directly to PhD programs in the Fall of the year they complete their Masters’, an August completion date is optimal.

Graduation Dates on the Transcript: The Office of the Registrar will record graduation dates according to when all materials are completed. Three possible dates that may be recorded:
   1. The May graduation date (whose deadlines are summarized above) is the only date associated with a Commencement Exercise;
   2) August completion date. All materials must be completed and submitted appropriately by the date summer school grades are due, and
   3) December completion date. All required materials and activities are completed and submitted after the start of the Fall Semester, and prior to the start of the Spring semester.
CONFERENCE SUPPORT

The Bridge Program is committed to supporting its students as they extend their scientific network through attendance of conferences. We will fully fund one conference during the Master’s phase (typically in the second year) and if you matriculate at Vanderbilt, one conference during the last two years of your PhD work. Any additional conference attendance will be considered on a case-by-case basis. Please note the following:

1) Advisors must approve all conference attendance before booking any travel.
2) Students should be presenting their work at the conference.
3) Application for internal and external travel funds is strongly encouraged.

STUDENT TRAVEL FUNDING, RESERVATION & REGISTRATION DEADLINE

- At this time we can only book for Fisk students.
- Dr. Stroud or Dr. Campbell will pay for your reservation, reserve the hotel, and book your flight. Shuttles and other items are handled independently. Dr. Campbell will assist you in filing your reimbursement following the trip.
- Reimbursements will go through Oracle and you must be in this system before your travel. Please see Dr. Stroud or Dr. Campbell for assistance.
- Try to avoid late fees and register for all meetings and conferences before early registration concludes. (2-3 months prior)
- To get conference hotel and registration discounts complete both at the same time.
- Optimally, airfare should be booked a month (or more) and no later than 2 weeks before.
- If your meeting is international, book hotel and flights three months ahead of time.

Make every effort to not book within days before the meeting

TRAVEL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES EXPERTS

For Fisk student travel that is not supported by the Bridge, please consult with Mr. Coca to obtain the grant travel regulations and guidelines.

For Vanderbilt student travel that is supported by the Bridge Program, consult with Dr. Stroud or Dr. Campbell.

PERSONAL AIR TRAVEL

If you are traveling to a meeting from somewhere other than Nashville due to your own personal travel, you will be expected to pay the difference in the price of the ticket. For example, if you are on vacation in Maine and need to fly to California, the difference in the cost of the ticket will need to be paid at the time of booking the flight.

MEALS

In general, limit daily food expenditures to no more than $25 a day.
RESEARCH EXPECTATIONS

Expectations for Students in the Materials Science and Applications Group

PI: Arnold Burger

Weekly Hours:
- total minimum hours/week: 40 hours
- time spent in lab/office:
  - 10 weekly hours in Semester 1, and 2. Remainder of 30+ hrs spent on coursework
  - 30 weekly hours in Semester 3. Remainder of 10+ hrs spent on unfinished coursework
  - 40 weekly hours in Summer 1, Summer 2, and Semester 4

Allowed to partially work at home/off campus during Semester 4 only

Communication:
- Email: aburger@fisk.edu
- Phone: (615)329-8516 or Cell: (615)521-1719
- use of correct affiliation
- Teleconference by Skype: arnoldburger
- acknowledgement of funding
- use of Fisk email and appointments using MS Outlook

Lab notes:
Personal notebook but preferable online/shareable. Notes should be taken during the face to face office meetings.

Chain of command:
The student should consult with senior grad and (lab mentor postdoc or research professor) prior to discussions with Dr. Burger

Meetings:
- Weekly progress report by email (copy Dr. Stroud and lab mentor)
- Monthly talk at research group meeting (5-15 min, as needed)
- Office meetings with Dr. Burger, as needed

Department Events:
The students are also expected to attend and present at the Fisk Research Symposium (early April, Bridge Research Symposium), and by invitation at CREST-BioSS Center meetings. Students may also attend group meetings at Vanderbilt after notifying such interest to Dr. Burger and Dr. Stroud
Equipment/Supplies:
The procurement, use, and care for lab equipment should be done by through training sessions by lab advisers.

The Lab Advisers in the Materials Science and Applications Group are:
- Dr. Rastgo Hawrami
- Dr. Emmanuel Rowe
- Dr. Liviu Matei
- Dr. Joy Garnnett
- Mr. Vlad Buliga

For administrative issues please contact Dr. Burger’s assistant: Maggie Zlibut, mzlibut@fisk.edu, (615)329-8705

Time off:
Please consult the Academic Calendar posted at https://www.fisk.edu/academics/academic-calendar for dates when Fisk University is closed for students, faculty, staff, and administrators. All other days off should be requested through the Paycom system, https://www.paycom.com/ following the rules of Fisk University employees.

Other:
Although the publication of a paper in a peer review journal is not mandatory, it is highly recommended. The participation to a national student conference (at least one in 2 years) where the primary focus is networking is highly recommended. Summer internships in other research groups should be planned together with Dr. Burger and Dr. Stroud such that they will have results that can be incorporated in the MA thesis. External members of thesis committee are highly encouraged.

Rev. July 18, 2019
Expectations for Students in the Holley-Bockelmann Group

Are you interested in galaxies, dark matter, black holes, gravitational waves, dynamics and simulations? Me too! Actually, I’m interested in most things astronomy, and have even dabbled in observational work. If you work with me, we will find a project you’re interested in, too -- one that is publishable in a refereed astronomy research journal. My group is big, active, cooperative, and supportive of one another. We are sometimes silly, but we take our work very seriously. If you love astronomy and are ready to put your brain and heart into your research, we’ll work well together.

**What you can expect from me:** I will make time for you -- unless I’m traveling, we’ll meet at least once a week to talk one-on-one about your research. I will provide honest and detailed feedback on your work, as well as career advice for whatever you want to do after this step. I will promote you and your work, introducing you to bigwigs, mentioning you in talks, suggesting you for opportunities, nominating you for awards, and generally making sure that you are known for your work. I’ll be diligent in applying for grants to support you financially. I believe that you bring your whole self to the table as a scientist, so I will listen and respect and support your whole self to the very best of my ability.

**What I expect from you:** In my view, grad school is an apprenticeship and you are a junior collaborator. I expect you to commit to your research and professional development wholeheartedly. I expect you to work extremely hard -- though I hate to put specific hours down, for me, it takes a minimum of 50 hours a week to make steady progress in research -- that’s on top of the other stuff I do. Although you’ll do some work at home, I expect you to be in the office during the day so you can go to talks, interact with the astronomy group, meet with visitors, etc. -- this is as important for your professional development as writing clean code! I expect you to communicate with me. If I write you an email, I expect you to respond promptly. We use Slack and Skype, too. I expect you to attend our individual meetings, astronomy events, Bridge events, and group meetings, and I would *love* you to ask questions, pose thoughts, and be an active participant when you do. If you cannot attend something, I expect an email beforehand explaining why, and if there’s a problem in your life that impacts your work, I expect you to tell me so I can try to help. To impress me, you should bring a plot to each meeting -- even if it’s wrong, it explains the problem much better than a screenshot of numbers or snippet of code. You should keep a research notebook, you should google basic questions, and you should back up your data!

**What I’m working to improve:**

Unfortunately, my schedule is super-packed, and I travel a lot, so there’s little time for you to pop into my office -- I have team office hours if you have a quick question or want to talk through something. Otherwise, I live by my google calendar -- I’ll share it with you and you should use it to schedule extra meetings, see what I’m up to, etc. If it’s not on the calendar, I probably won’t remember to do it and will need 1000 reminders.

*Rev. July 24, 2019*
Expectations for Students in the Ramanathan Group

**PI:** Saumya Ramanathan Ph.D.

**Weekly Hours:**

**Semester 1 and 2**
20 hours/week in lab (bench work, literature review and other associated work related to your research project), 20 hours/week on course work. This does not include time to get to Vanderbilt and back and time spent getting reagents at MCBR core etc.,

**Semester 3 and 4**
40 hours/week in lab doing benchwork, writing, reading and other associated work related to your research project

**Summers and December**
40 hours/week in lab doing benchwork, writing, reading and other associated work related to your research project

Just a note, that often times 40 hours/week is not enough to get everything done and productivity *will not be solely* measured based on the time spent in lab.

**Communication:**
Email whenever possible and in-person meetings by appointment. Quick clarifications do not need appointment.

**Lab notes:**
LabArchives account will be set up following entry into the lab. Use and upkeep of online notebook is required.

**Chain of command:**
Dr. Ramanathan is first point of contact.

**Meetings:**
Weekly one-on-one meetings with PI at a time decided by both PI and student, where the student is prepared to discuss progress made in the previous week, and goals and plans for the next week.

Weekly lab meetings with the lab, at a time decided by the whole lab, where students take turns in presenting a formal research presentation.

**Department Events:**
Journal club, seminars with outside speakers, Cool science cafe, Pharmacology Seminar series at Vanderbilt.

**Equipment/Supplies:**
refer to notes from lab tour/orientation.

**Time off:**
Time off requires 2-3 month notice and approval by PI.

*Rev. July 18, 2019*
RESEARCH EXPECTATIONS (adapted from Newell et al., 2003)
You can use this rubric to track your own growth toward becoming a professional scientist. It’s a good idea to share this with your advisor to get their feedback, too.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>INDICATOR</th>
<th>MEETING EXPECTATIONS</th>
<th>APPROACHING EXPECTATIONS</th>
<th>BELOW EXPECTATIONS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BASIC CONCEPTS</td>
<td>Fully grasps basic concepts underlying research project</td>
<td>Can understand concepts involved in research project with some assistance</td>
<td>Has little grasp of basic concepts underlying research</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TECHNICAL SKILLS</td>
<td>Is capable of quickly adopting technical skills necessary to complete project</td>
<td>Masters techniques with supervision and assistance</td>
<td>Needs continual supervision to perform lab work or use tools required in research</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INDEPENDENT THINKING</td>
<td>Independently analyzes data, generates conclusions and hypotheses</td>
<td>Contributes to project planning and analysis with moderate guidance</td>
<td>Little contribution to project design or direction, data interpretation, or troubleshooting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT</td>
<td>Consistently behaves in a professional manner (shows up for meetings prepared and on time, treats others with courtesy and respect in person and in communications)</td>
<td>Usually behaves in a professional manner, does not repeat errors</td>
<td>Frequently fails to behave in a professional manner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MEETS DEADLINES</td>
<td>Consistently meets deadlines</td>
<td>Misses some deadlines despite reasonable effort</td>
<td>Routinely misses deadlines or asks for extensions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DEFINES OBJECTIVES</td>
<td>Is actively involved in defining achievable objectives that thoroughly addresses fundamental project needs</td>
<td>Aids in defining objectives, some may be too simplistic or unrealistic</td>
<td>Takes little initiative in defining the project</td>
</tr>
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<tr>
<td>COMMUNICATION SKILLS</td>
<td>Written and oral communication is of high quality; student clearly expresses the questions and findings in his/her research</td>
<td>Written work is clear and adequately presented, but may lack precision and/or concision</td>
<td>Has difficulty elucidating research questions or adequately presenting data</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USE OF LITERATURE</td>
<td>Clearly demonstrates an awareness of the works of others and establishes a context for the project; shows an understanding of information from multiple literature sources</td>
<td>Shows limited understanding of the work in the field; knowledge is primarily from faculty provided materials</td>
<td>Fails to demonstrate an awareness of the works of others and the significance of their project</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OBTAINS APPROPRIATE RESULTS</td>
<td>Obtains meaningful results with minimal wasted effort</td>
<td>Produces some results, but not enough; may have difficulty overcoming setbacks</td>
<td>Generates few meaningful results</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INTERPRETS DATA APPROPRIATELY</td>
<td>Provides thorough and correct analysis of data</td>
<td>Provides analysis but partially incorrect or not sufficiently thorough</td>
<td>Little meaningful analysis of data or blatantly incorrect</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FORMULATES SUPPORTABLE CONCLUSIONS</td>
<td>Formulates and adequately supports meaningful conclusions</td>
<td>Needs help in formulating meaningful conclusions or lacks sufficient support for their conclusions</td>
<td>Conclusions are absent, wrong, trivial, or unsubstantiated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ORGANIZES TASKS</td>
<td>Effectively organizes project tasks to minimize wasted time and effort</td>
<td>Identifies relevant tasks but may struggle with setting priorities and planning</td>
<td>Has difficulty converting broad objectives to specific task</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
TRANSFER CREDIT HOURS TO VANDERBILT

Transferring your course work credit hours to Vanderbilt is not automatic but it is fairly simple. Below is the procedure for requesting your course work to be transferred to your Vanderbilt student record.

- Please complete the transfer request spreadsheet.
- Submit your request to the Director of Graduate Studies for your program administrator
- The Graduate Program Committee (GPC) will review your request. If not approved, the GPC will inform you why or ask for further information. If approved, a letter from the DGS will then be sent to the Graduate School for final approval by the Graduate School Dean, Richard Hoover. Once approved, you will see your transfer credit hours on your VU transcript.

Only graduate courses with a B or better can be transferred. For a Ph.D. degree, a maximum of 48 hours may be transferred. Grades earned on transfer credit WILL affect your VU Graduate School Grade Point Average (GPA), if courses transferred are to be counted as didactic hours. (Research work does NOT count as didactic hours.)

The Ph.D. degree requires at least 72 hours of graduate work for credit, of which minimum must be 24 hours in formal, didactic course and seminar work in the Vanderbilt Graduate School.

“Formal, didactic course work” is approved courses taken for credit other than thesis and dissertation research courses. Students should check departmental regulations for the number of “formal course” hours required for their particular program. (28 for Physics & Astronomy).

If a student wishes to transfer credit hours, and the GPC considers those courses comparable to ones at VU, then the Graduate School will accept them as essentially replacements for the VU courses. In other words, GPC-approved transfer credit hours will apply towards the required 24 hours in formal, didactic course and seminar work in the Vanderbilt Graduate School.

UNIVERSITY COUNSELING SERVICES at FISK 615-329-8776

The expectations for independent learning and resourcefulness that underlie graduate training, in concert with the high academic demands, can bring multiple sources of stress to the surface. We advise reaching out for confidential conversations with counselors at your earliest moment of need. Students can schedule a consultation via Ms. Tonyette Davis, 615-329-8861, at the Fisk counseling Center, located on the 4th Floor /B wing of Shane Hall (https://www.fisk.edu/services-resources/counseling-center). The emergency contact is Dr. Sheila Peters, 615-497-2963, a licensed clinical psychologist who in emergency situations can identify the most appropriate clinical professional to meet a particular student’s needs.

Occasionally, a student may be encouraged or even required to attend counseling sessions, advice intended with the student’s best interests in mind. Like for Fisk undergraduates, when a graduate student is required to attend counseling sessions with a University counselor or one outside Fisk, proof of completion of this counseling will be required to be provided to the Dean of Graduate Studies, particularly if this counseling has corresponded to a leave of absence by a student.

THE VANDERBILT UNIVERSITY COUNSELING CENTER (UCC) 615-322-2571
https://www.vanderbilt.edu/ucc/

The UCC offers a range of services to Vanderbilt students including Short-term individual psychotherapy, Crisis Care Counseling /Drop-in urgent counseling, Short-term psychiatric services/medication management, Trauma-informed care (ACT Team), Biofeedback, LD/ADHD assessment, Alcohol and other drugs (AOD) assessment and consultation, Group psychotherapy.

At this time, Fisk students are not eligible for UCC services.

RESOURCES at VANDERBILT (available to Fisk students)

Center for Student Wellbeing (CSW) healthydores@vanderbilt.edu
The Center for Student Wellbeing is committed to helping students thrive within the Vanderbilt community and maintain lifelong wellness practices. We are here to help students who may need assistance in a variety of areas: Wellbeing and Academic Coaching, Skill Building Workshops, Meditation and Yoga, Recover Support Services, etc.

Office of Student Health and Wellness 615-322-0480
Office of Religious Life 615-322-2457 / 322-2571

Women’s Center 615-322-4843
LGBTQ Life (Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender Queer Intersex) 615-322-3330
MEMBERSHIP FEES
The Bridge Program often covers the initial membership fee to a professional society when a student is presenting research for the first time, but otherwise society memberships are an individual responsibility, which is one of those things that comes with professional life.

BRIDGE SOCIAL LIFE
We encourage students from both campuses to get together in a social atmosphere. The Program will organize and pay for a couple social events each semester. Guests are always welcome, but you must RSVP in advance if you wish to participate. Students may request additional activities if there is significant interest from the group. See Dr. Campbell for planning and finances.

OUTREACH ACTIVITIES
Engaging in STEM outreach is a great way to give back to the community to share your love of science and inspire future scientists. There are several short-term and longer-term outreach opportunities available in the Nashville area. See Dr. Campbell if you have an idea or want to get involved.

EXERCISE & THE GRADUATE STUDENT
Exercise is one of the best ways to combat the stress of graduate school. You have access to a gym at Fisk and you can also pay to use the gym at Vanderbilt. There are also a number of community centers, low cost gyms, and YMCA facilities around the area. Our system of greenways for walking, cycling or running is improving every year.

Vanderbilt Rec Center........................................................................................................http://www.vanderbilt.edu/recadmin/
   Fisk Graduate Student rate approximately $175 per semester
   Nashville Greenways ........................................................................................................http://www.nashville.gov/greenways/
   B-Cycles ........................................................................................................................................http://nashville.bcycle.com/
   24 hr-$5=online or at B-station, credit card only   7 day-$10   30 day-$15   annual-$50 online, credit card only

VANDERBILT TOASTMASTERS
Vanderbilt Toastmasters meets twice a month in Buttrick 310 or 308. The club is a learning environment for improving not only public speaking, but also leadership skills. There is a self-paced manual with 10 speech projects, focusing on topics like organizing your speech to selecting the right words to vocal variety and more. Once finished with that manual you can move on to advanced manuals like “Technical Presentations” for more focus on a specific type of speech. Vanderbilt’s club is open to all and dues are $30 per semester; new members will also need a $20 new member kit.

To give a sense of a general meeting, each meeting essentially has a three parts: speeches prepared from the project manual, impromptu speeches, and evaluations. There is a Toastmaster, of course, acting as the master of ceremonies. Evaluators immediately give feedback on prepared speeches using the CRE (commendation, recommendation, encouragement) method. There are several other roles during the meeting including the Ah-counter, who looks for words like “ah,” “and,” and “um” etc. that detract from the speech. The general mission of the meeting is everyone in the room gets to speak.