Developing comprehensive Behavior Programs
Are you seeing “green shoots”? 

At Vanderbilt’s Peabody College, as with other institutions, we see them all the time. Paradoxically, they seem to be most visible in the fall.

We see them, for example, in the nine new faculty members who have joined our ranks, including two new endowed chair holders. This year’s hires underline existing strengths in such areas as educational neuroscience, math and science education, and visual impairments.

Students are perennial green shoots. This year we have welcomed a bumper crop of new master’s students along with another class of truly outstanding doctoral students. Peabody’s population of graduate and professional students is at a modern high.

Our garden of research initiatives is also looking strong. Having weathered a great deal of climate change at the federal level, we were pleased to learn that external funding for research in fiscal 2009 was six percent higher than the prior year. Particularly significant were new grants for collaborations with schools to strengthen early childhood literacy and examine pre-K education.

So where do we go from here? Without doubt, if these shoots are to thrive they will need watering. This year we are emphasizing rich learning experiences that occur both inside and outside the classroom. This includes developing communities of practice for our professional students and deepening our engagement with learners, schools and organizations, both domestically and internationally.

As we work to nurture the distinctive qualities that make Peabody the exciting place it is, our watchwords for 2009–10 are relevance and rigor. As always, Ideas in Action will keep you posted.

Camilla P. Benbow
Patricia and Rodes Hart Dean of Education and Human Development
Peabody Welcome New Faculty for 2009–2010

DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN AND ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT
William L. Turner Betts Professor of Education and Human Development; Ph.D. ’90, Virginia Polytechnic and State University; Previously: University of Minnesota

DEPARTMENT OF LEADERSHIP, POLICY AND ORGANIZATIONS
Mimi Engal Assistant Professor of Public Policy and Education; Ph.D. ’08, Northwestern University

DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHOLOGY AND HUMAN DEVELOPMENT
Sun-Joo Cho Assistant Professor of Psychology; Ph.D. ’07, University of Georgia. Previously: post-doctoral scholar, University of California, Berkeley
Joseph McLaughlin Associate Clinical Professor of Psychology; Ph.D. ’79, Vanderbilt University. Previously: private practice

DEPARTMENT OF SPECIAL EDUCATION
Laurie Cuttin Patricia and Rodes Hart Professor of Special Education; Ph.D. ’99, Northwestern University. Previously: University of Pittsburgh
Deborah D. Hatton Associate Professor of Special Education; Ph.D. ’95, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Previously: Frank Porter Graham Child Development Center, UNC

DEPARTMENT OF TEACHING AND LEARNING
Douglas Clark Associate Professor of Science Education; Ph.D. ’00, University of California, Berkeley. Previously: Arizona State University

Jana Horn Associate Professor of Mathematics Education; Ph.D. ’02, University of California, Berkeley. Previously: University of Washington
Pratim Sengupta Assistant Professor of Science Education; Ph.D. ’09, Northwestern University

NEW PRE-DOCTORAL FELLows PROGRAM TO ASSIST WITH SHIFTING JOB MARKET
This spring, Peabody inaugurated a competitive new Pre-Doctoral Fellows Program to assist Peabody doctoral candidates who are facing a difficult university job market due to the current economic climate.

“Peabody doctoral candidates who are ready to graduate and go on the job market for research university positions are facing a gap in university hiring,” said Camilla Benbow, Patricia and Rodes Hart Dean of Education and Human Development. “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 to their benefit to have them ready to be the strongest candidates when those jobs start opening up.”

“We are offering a competitive program for Ph.D. students who have defended their dissertations and anticipate or may not be having success in the current job environment,” said Craig Anne Heffinger, associate dean for graduate education and professor of human and organizational development. “This would involve their staying on as Ph.D. students at Peabody while working on further professional development.”

The program will allow Ph.D. candidates up to two years of additional study and involves full-time effort in four areas: scholarship of teaching, research apprenticeship, systematic advanced methods training and writing for publication. In addition to the more advanced training, the fellows will receive a monthly stipend, health insurance and activity fees.

More information on the pre-doctoral fellows program can be found at peabody.vanderbilt.edu/Office_of_the_Dean/Pre-Doctoral_Fellows_Program.xml.

PEABODY HOSTS NATIONAL CONFERENCE ON TEACHER RETIREMENT BENEFIT SYSTEMS
More than 80 experts convened at Peabody to discuss and debate the controversial field of teacher retirement benefit systems at a conference February 19–20. The conference was hosted by the college’s National Center on Performance Incentives, drew scholars from universities and research institutions across the country to discuss the design and implications of teacher retirement systems used in the American K-12 public education system.

“The subject of teacher pensions is a critical and understudied area for education reform, both because of the effects on the teacher workforce and on school finance. Districts are looking for new ways to recruit and retain high quality teachers in their on-going efforts to raise student achievement and narrow achievement gaps, and the structure of retirement benefits is a potentially important factor,” said Matthew Springer, NCFP director and research assistant professor of public policy and education. “Many states and districts also face increasing costs for their current retirement benefit systems—possibly exacerbated by recent developments in the value of pension funds.”

The conference, “Rethinking Teacher Retirement Benefit Systems,” was hosted jointly by NCFP, the Department of Education Reform at the University of Arkansas and the University of Missouri-Columbia.

The papers presented are available on the NCFP Web site: www.performanceincentives.org/conference/papers2009.asp.

PEABODY RESEARCH INSTITUTE TO CONDUCT FIRST ASSESSMENT OF TENNESSEE’S PRE-K PROGRAM
Vanderbilt University’s new Peabody Research Institute and the Tennessee Department of Education have announced a partnership to conduct the first statewide evaluation of the effectiveness of Tennessee’s Volunteer Pre-K Program. The five-year, $6 million statewide scientific study is being funded by a grant from the U.S. Department of Education’s Institute of Education Sciences.

The study will examine the effectiveness of Tennessee’s pre-K program for enhancing children’s readiness for kindergarten and improving their achievement in later grades. The goal is to gather data in order to make informed decisions concerning the program and to identify areas of improvement to increase its overall quality.

“We are very pleased to collaborate with the state of Tennessee and its Office of Early Learning on a project of this magnitude. It has the potential to strengthen education policies and practices for Tennessee’s earliest learners and for pre-kindergarten students across the nation.”

Camilla Benbow, Patricia and Rodes Hart Dean of Education and Human Development, said.

“We are offering a competitive program for Ph.D. students who have defended their dissertations and anticipate or may not be having success in the current job environment.” — Craig Anne Heffinger (at right)

Above: Peabody welcomed its largest class of master’s and doctoral students in recent history at an outdoor barbecue in August.

IDEAS IN ACTION Fall 2009
**Outstanding teachers and education scholars from around the world are studying at Peabody this fall through the Hubert H. Humphrey Fellowship and Distinguished Fulbright Awards in Teaching programs.**

**VANDERBILT SERVING AS RESEARCH PARTNER TO NEW TENNESSEE EDUCATION INITIATIVE**

Vanderbilt has joined a collaboration organized by former U.S. Senate Majority Leader Bill Frist that seeks to make education a top priority for Tennessee. The State Collaborative on Reforming Education (SCORE), a nonpartisan initiative, hopes to jump-start education reform efforts across the state. Vanderbilt is serving as a research partner.

To underscore its significance as well as its breadth, Frist was joined at the announcement by Gov. Phil Bredesen, Tennessee Commissioner of Education Tim Webb, Nashville Mayor Karl Dean and other education, community, political and business leaders, including Vanderbilt representatives.

“Vanderbilt has been asked to serve as the research partner for this innovative effort. In this role, Peabody faculty will have the opportunity to present research on current education challenges and initiatives and to provide input on action plans that may arise out of the commission’s work.” — Camilla P. Benbow

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**Notes and Honors**

**Camilla P. Benbow, Patricia and Rodes Hart Dean of Education and Human Development, was elected to the Executive Committee of the National Science Board at its May meeting in Arlington, Virginia.**

**Erik Carter, Ph.D.’04, was awarded the 2009 Early Career Research Award from the Council for Exceptional Children’s Division for Research. Carter is assistant professor in the Department of Rehabilitation Psychology and Special Education at the University of Wisconsin-Madison.**

**Stephen N. Elliott, Dunn Family Professor of Educational and Psychological Assessment, has received the Senior Scientist Award from Division 16 of the American Psychological Association.**

**Darcy Freedman, Ph.D.’08, has received the “Best Dissertation on a Topic Relevant to Community Psychology Award” from Division 27 of the American Psychological Association. Freedman is assistant professor in the College of Social Work at the University of South Carolina.**

**Ellen Goldberg, Patricia and Rodes Hart Chair, has been appointed chair of the Department of Leadership, Policy and Organizations.**

**Steve Graham, Curney Ingram Professor of Special Education, has begun service on the National Research Council’s Adult Literacy Panel. Graham and Karen Harris, who shares the Curney Ingram Professorship, also have agreed to serve as members of an Expert Working Group on Development and Writing Instruction for the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development and the National Institute of Literacy.**

**James W. Guthrie, Patricia and Rodes Hart Professor of Educational Leadership and Policy, has received the Distinguished Service Award from the American Education Finance Association.**

**Craig Anne Heffinger, associate dean for graduate education, was promoted to professor of human and organizational development.**

**Robert Jiménez, professor of language, literacy and culture, has been elected president of the National Reading Conference.**

**Christopher P. Loss, assistant professor of public policy and higher education, received the Outstanding Dissertation Award from the Politics in Education Association.**

**David Lubinski, professor of psychology, received a MENSa Award for Research Excellence (Senior Investigator Award) for his article, “Tracking Exceptional Human Capital over Two Decades,” in Psychological Science (2006). Camilla P. Benbow, Rose Mary Webb, and April Blesske-Rischek were co-authors.**

**Joseph F. Murphy, Frank W. Mayborn Professor, is the first recipient of the Excellence in Research Award from AERA’s Division for Administration, Organization and Leadership.**

**Maury Nation was promoted to associate professor of human and organizational development.**

**Kimberly Paulsen, associate professor of the practice in special education, received the Peabody Award for Excellence in Advising and Service.**

**Victoria J. Risko, professor of education, was elected vice president/president elect of the International Reading Association.**

**Megan Saylor was promoted to associate professor of psychology.**

**Pamela Seethaler, M.Ed.’94, Ph.D.’08, research associate, received the Outstanding Dissertation Award from the Council for Exceptional Children’s Division of Learning Disabilities for “The Predictive Utility of Kindergarten Screening for Math Difficulty: How, When, and With Respect to What Outcome Should It Occur?”**

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**Jim Guthrie, Patricia and Rodes Hart Professor of Educational Leadership and Policy, will serve as Vanderbilt’s primary liaison to the collaborative.**

More information is available at [tennesseescore.org](http://tennesseescore.org).
Early data from a project evaluating the first-year impact of New York City’s performance pay program, the School-Wide Performance Bonus Program (SPBP), finds no discernable impact on student achievement thus far. However, the report’s authors caution that it is too soon to draw any overall conclusions about the program’s impact.

“Our analysis did not reveal a significant impact on student proficiency or school environment. However, it is important to note that this working paper can only address the short-run effects of the program,” report co-author Matthew Springer, director of the National Center on Performance Incentives at Vanderbilt University and a research assistant professor of public policy and education, said. “We anticipate being able to provide more meaningful information about the impact when data become available from the 2008-09 school year.”

Marcus Winters, a senior fellow at the Manhattan Institute, co-authored the paper.

Implemented midway into the 2007-2008 school year, the School-Wide Performance Bonus Program rewards schools for meeting performance targets established under New York City’s performance pay program, “Since the program was not implemented until halfway through the 2007-08 school year, and data for this study come from the 2006-07 and 2007-08 school years, the results of this paper should be treated as a baseline for subsequent analysis of the impact of the SPBP on student outcomes, teacher behavior and schooling practices,” the authors said.

“A second-year evaluation of the program, which will provide fuller and more reliable data, is forthcoming.”

For more information on the National Center on Performance Incentives at Vanderbilt University, visit www.performanceincentives.org.

Down Syndrome and Ethnicity

A Vanderbilt Kennedy Center study of mothers of newborns with Down syndrome (DS) shows a need for health care and social services policies to address differences related to ethnicity/race and age of mothers. The study, which appeared in the September 2008 Journal of Policy and Practice in Intellectual Disabilities, was conducted by Robert Hodapp, professor of special education, and Richard Urbano, research professor of pediatrics.

Little research has been done on ethnic/racial differences among mothers of young children with Down Syndrome. The researchers used official Tennessee birth records from 1990 to 2002 to examine ethnic/racial differences among mothers of young children with Down Syndrome. They looked at mother’s age when the infant was born, education levels of mothers, marital status of mothers, and neighborhood median income.

They found differences between African-American mothers and mothers of European-heritage descent. Compared with European-heritage mothers, African-American mothers of newborns with Down Syndrome were of lower socioeconomic levels and were younger, with many more African-American mothers giving birth at 23 years or younger. In both groups, the young mothers had the highest percentage of women who had not graduated from high school and who were unmarried. From earlier studies, mothers who are unmarried and who have not graduated high school show greater support needs, even as they are less likely to know about and to make use of available services.

These findings point to the need for targeted health care and social support services for African-American mothers specifically, and young mothers generally, who give birth to children with Down Syndrome, which is often accompanied by an array of health issues.

For more information on the Vanderbilt Kennedy Center visit kc.vanderbilt.edu
Churches with predominantly black congregations are thriving in urban and suburban areas, and the most successful churches employ a variety of sophisticated marketing and programming strategies to draw members, a new study by Sandra Barnes, professor of human and organizational development, finds.

The report, “Enter into his gates: An analysis of black church participation patterns,” was published in the March issue of the journal Sociological Spectrum. The report examines changes in adult church participation rates from 1995 to 2000 based on a national survey of 1,863 predominantly black churches across seven Christian denominations. It is the first study to use a national sample of black congregations to examine this issue.

Barnes found that today’s parishioners are “religiously savvy” and expect more from their church service, such as sermons and Bible studies relevant to everyday life, activities for individuals and families, and innovative worship services that incorporate dance and music.

“The broader societal change we have seen in consumerism is also manifesting in the religious arena. We expect more, bigger and better... As in the retail environment, today’s churchgoers are savvy shoppers.”

“Successful churches are very savvy when it comes to marketing. Word of mouth continues to be an important tool, but it is no longer the primary mechanism,” Barnes said. “Web sites, television ads and prime time exposure all play a role. Churches are using very intentional marketing strategies and much of it relies on technology.”

Churches that focused on and generated excitement about their own future experienced greater participation than those that did not. In addition, those churches with sound financial health experienced higher participation, as did larger churches when compared with smaller churches.

Overall, urban and suburban black churches grew approximately five percent from 1995 to 2000, while participation in rural black churches dropped.

The report was based on data drawn from a national database maintained from 1995 to 2000 based on a national survey of 1,863 predominantly black churches across seven Christian denominations.

The broader societal change we have seen in consumerism is also manifesting in the religious arena. We expect more, bigger and better... As in the retail environment, today’s churchgoers are savvy shoppers.

Statewide Survey Finds Small Businesses Concerned About Health Care, Want Voice in Debate

With health care on the national agenda, a recent survey suggests that Tennessee’s small businesses share many of the concerns held nationally.

While only half of Tennessee small businesses offer health insurance to their employees, nearly all agree it is time to pay attention to health care reform and want to be involved in the debate, a new survey indicates.

The survey was conducted by Craig Anne Heflinger, professor of human and organizational development; Marielle Lovecchio, a master’s student majoring in community development and action; Jill Robinson, doctoral student in community research and action; and Lori Smith, of the Tennessee Small Business Coalition.

“Small business owners report that their businesses are struggling with health care costs, they anticipate even more challenges in this area in the future, and that health care reform is a way to get the economy back on track,” the authors wrote in the survey report.

A majority of those surveyed agreed that all Americans should have access to quality health care coverage and should not lose that coverage due to illness, age or changing jobs, but less than half (44 percent) agreed businesses have a responsibility to offer health coverage to employees. On that question, responses differed depending on whether or not the business currently offered coverage. Fifty-three percent of those currently providing coverage believed a business had a responsibility to do so, compared to 52 percent of those that do not.

Choice between public and private plans was favored by a majority of respondents. Many reported fears that a single public plan would result in lower quality of care and higher costs. In addition, a majority of respondents expressed concerns about private insurance companies and wanted more federal oversight of them.

The authors mailed surveys to 3,000 businesses in Tennessee that employ 50 or fewer employees in March 2009, with 245 responding within 60 days. The businesses were randomly selected from the Dun and Bradstreet “Million Dollar Database.” The respondents represented Tennessee’s three grand divisions, with slightly more than half located in urban areas and nearly half working in retail/wholesale, restaurant/food industry, construction and industrial/manufacturing businesses. Thirty-eight percent employed 10 or fewer employees.

The research was supported with funding and other resources by the Small Business Majority. “Consumer Voices for Coverage,” a national program of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and Community Catalyst, and the Center for Community Studies.

The full report is available at: peabody.vanderbilt.edu/Center_for_Community_Studies.xml.

OTHER KEY FINDINGS INCLUDE:

- 81 percent of respondents believed Congress did not pay attention to small business owners.
- 61 percent believed health care reform will “help our economy get back on track.”
- 81 percent believed “all Americans must have access to affordable, quality health care coverage.”
- 93 percent said businesses need quality health plans with predictable costs.
- 74 percent said insurers, business, individuals and the government must share responsibility to make affordable health care coverage widely available.

My business is struggling to afford health coverage

Businesses need quality health plans with predictable costs

Private insurers, businesses, individuals & the government must all share the responsibility & cost

The survey showed high agreement with these items focusing on affordability.
"The lack of writing and writing instruction was more pronounced in social studies and science, but even language arts teachers provided little writing instruction for their students," Graham, Currey Ingram Professor of Special Education, said. "Another disturbing finding was the sizable number of teachers who made few or no adaptations in their teaching efforts to assist weaker writers." According to the results, teachers rarely ask high school students to complete assignments that involve writing more than a single paragraph, and most common writing assignments involve little to no analysis or interpretation. Some teachers reported using a variety of effective writing practices, but indicated that the use was infrequent, removing their effectiveness.

"Writing is an important tool for educational, occupational and social success," Graham said. "Writing instruction needs to be reformed to improve high school student work as well as strengthening the ability for success in college and beyond."
“These centers represent the next step in translat- ing research into practice,” said Kaiser. “It is important to have gotten to the point where you are taking a well-researched intervention out into the community.” Kaiser and her colleagues have been working on naturalistic communication intervention with young children for many years and have published about 40 papers related to this intervention. “This project represents where we are as a field with naturalistic communication intervention,” she said.

KidTalk-Tactics provides a continuous communication intervention for children from infancy until age five. Most of the children who participate are enrolled between 12 and 18 months of age. In all, forty children and their families in the Nashville area will receive the intervention. An additional 30 children and their families at the Florida site complement the Nashville group.

Kaiser, who holds the Susan Gray Chair in Education and Human Development, is in the second year of a four-year project to develop and demonstrate a model naturalistic language intervention for children who are identified with needs very early in their lives. Her KidTalk-Tactics Project (KTTP) is funded by the U.S. Department of Education’s Office of Special Education Programs. Terry Hancock, research assistant professor of special education, and Julann Woods, chair of the Department of Communication Disorders at Florida State University, are co-investigators. KTTP is one of three centers nationally charged with developing model programs for naturalistic communication interventions for children age birth-to-five and their families, caregivers, and teachers. Other centers are located at the University of Kansas and the Oselena Hawks Puckett Institute in Morganton, North Carolina.

“KidTalk-Tactics spans two different legally mandated service delivery systems. Under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, children from birth to age two receive what are known as Part C early intervention services. When the children turn three, they transition to Part B, with services typically provided by the local school system. Because children are reassessed at the time of transition, service delivery can be slowed. “Our goals are to teach parents strategies to support communication and to help families ensure continuity in their child’s communication intervention,” said Professor Ann Kaiser. “We’ll be part of the transition planning, and we’ll sit up from the beginning to be a consultant to that teacher and the therapists in the new setting.”
“The significance of this book is rooted in the need for a better understanding of new policies on race and schools, the social and political context of choice, and the consequences of these reform strategies for school systems in urban America and for the lives of educators, students and their families,” Goldring said.


“Examine the aftermath of desegregation, including both social and academic outcomes, against the growing evidence of resegregation across urban school districts in the United States. Does race matter? What is the role of expanded school choice programs (e.g., magnet schools) under these conditions?”

This book makes compelling the need to connect the imperatives of new policies on race and schooling to the practices of educational leaders facing the demands of diversity, equity, choice and excellence for all students. Student assignment policies represent some of the most complex and controversial decisions made by local school boards across the country,” Smekear and Goldring said. “It is our hope that this data may provide essential guideposts for districts considering the consequences of unitary status under the more restrictive new legal constraints regarding the use of race. This book is designed to highlight the short- and long-term implications of these decisions for schoolchildren, their families and communities.”

As the return to neighborhood schools accelerates, schools resegregate, and magnet programs assume new roles, this book provides timely information on critical social and academic outcomes for children,” Smekear said.

School desegregation, once a central piece of social and educational policy, has been ended by an increasing number of federal courts in recent years in urban school districts. When desegregation policies are removed, schools are designated as “unitary,” which means they are expected to implement a variety of policies focusing on school improvement, school choice and neighborhood schools, among other alternatives. Racial balancing of schools is no longer a priority.

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Focus on Faculty

College Awards Endowed Chairs to Six Faculty Members

T his spring marked 30 years since Peabody College merged with Vanderbilt University. To celebrate the anniversary, Vanderbilt awarded six new named endowed chairs to Peabody faculty members at the college’s spring faculty meeting on May 5.

“The six professors receiving these chairs are high-impact individuals who make important contributions to the practice of education or psychology,” Camilla Benbow, Patricia and Rodes Hart Dean of Education and Human Development, said. “Rewarding them with an endowed chair is our way of recognizing their accomplishments and of signifying to the world that Peabody is a place where great intellects gather and interact.”

Nineteen Peabody faculty members currently hold endowed chairs. The new chairs were awarded to:

Leonard Bickman, Betts Chair. Bickman is professor of psychology and psychiatry, director of the Center for Evaluation and Program Improvement, and an investigator in the Vanderbilt Kennedy Center. Professor Bickman is a nationally recognized leader in program evaluation and research on mental health services for children and adolescents. He has published more than 15 books and monographs and 180 articles and chapters.

David Cole, Patricia and Rodes Hart Chair. Cole is chair of the Department of Psychology and Human Development, professor of psychology and an investigator in the Vanderbilt Kennedy Center. Professor Cole’s scholarly interests encompass developmental psychopathology and childhood depression. He also studies the assessment of childhood disorders and the prediction of adolescent suicide.

Ellen Goldring, Patricia and Rodes Hart Chair. Goldring is professor of educational policy and leadership and incoming chair of the Department of Leadership, Policy and Organizations. Her research focuses on the changing roles of school leaders and on understanding and shaping reform efforts that connect families, communities and schools. She is co-editor of a new book, From the Courtroom to the Classroom: The Shifting Landscape of School Desegregation (see page 14).

James W. Guthrie (featured at left). Guthrie is professor of educational leadership and policy. Guthrie is professor of public policy and education, director of the Peabody Center for Education Policy, executive director of the National Center on Performance Incentives and former chair of the Department of Leadership, Policy and Organizations. Professor Guthrie is a widely acknowledged expert on school finance, legal issues of equity and adequacy, and education reform strategies.

Rich Lehrer, Frank W. Mayborn Chair. Lehrer is professor of science education. He is an internationally recognized scholar in the field of mathematics and science education. Professor Lehrer conducts his research in direct partnership with kindergarten through middle school teachers, applying knowledge of young children’s thinking about space and geometry to teach mathematical and scientific concepts built upon everyday experiences.

Joseph F. Murphy, Frank W. Mayborn Chair. Murphy is professor of education and associate dean. He is a nationally recognized scholar in the field of school administration and a leading advocate for school leadership reforms. He has authored or co-authored 15 books and two major monographs in this area and edited another 12 books. He is currently chairing a steering committee for a National Board for Professional Teaching Standards effort to develop an advanced certification for educational leaders.