Didactics
Numerous didactics and professional development opportunities are available to support the fellow’s training activities, such as an Alzheimer’s disease guest lecture series, brain cuttings, works-in-progress workshops, biostatistical meetings, journal clubs, and Neurology Grand Rounds. The fellow will gain experience in supervision of undergraduate and graduate trainees.

Required Didactics:

- **Cognitive & Behavioral Neurology Case Conference.** The Division sponsors a 90-minute Consensus Conference in which clinical, neurological and neuropsychological data are reviewed for clinic patients. An interdisciplinary team, including neurologists, neuropsychologists, and geriatric psychiatrists, review these data to achieve a consensus diagnosis, such as mild cognitive impairment or Alzheimer’s disease.

- **Vanderbilt Memory & Alzheimer’s Center Guest Lecture Series.** In the fall of 2012, Dr. Jefferson launched a monthly lecture series to host a distinguished national or international guest lecturer to visit our Center for 2 days during the academic year. During each visit, trainees interact with the guest lecturer in a 2-hour private round-table discussion, where trainees present their research ideas and receive feedback from the distinguished guest. Interaction with these nationally and internationally recognized experts in AD and cognitive aging offers trainees the opportunity to network with leaders in the field and receive feedback on their ideas from experts external to our campus.

- **Works-in-Progress Workshops.** This 90-minute biweekly meeting offers an informal venue for interdisciplinary experts at Vanderbilt to share ideas with trainees and foster new collaborations to promote interdepartmental and transdisciplinary relationships. The format involves a Vanderbilt-based guest expert presenting their clinical expertise and ongoing research activities, followed by a group discussion. Recent presenters include psychiatrists, radiologists, endocrinologists, and pathologists. To date, the WIP meeting has fostered numerous collaborations for my trainees with psychiatry (Warren Taylor, MD), radiology (Megan Strother, MD), endocrinology (Kevin Niswender, MD, PhD), pathology (Ty Abel, MD, PhD), and engineering (Bennett Landman, PhD). During ‘grant season’ this meeting block is used to review and critique trainee grant ideas, hypotheses, and content.

- **Biostatistical Meetings.** This weekly meeting is attended by all trainees and includes the Center’s biostatistical team. The meeting format includes (a) reviewing and discussing new research proposals, (b) reviewing preliminary descriptives, and (c) discussing hypothesis testing results. The group format provides trainees exposure to a diverse range of methodological and statistical approaches (e.g., to date, we have projects using logistic regression, general estimating equations, general linear mixed models, meta-analysis, factor analysis, and item-response theory). Trainees gain knowledge from discussions in selection and application of statistical methodologies.

- **Journal Club.** This 90-minute monthly journal club provides an opportunity for trainees to review key pieces of cognitive aging literature and discuss ideas where we can contribute to improving existing literature. The format is unique. Rather than identifying a single article for review, the identified “leader” for that particular week selects several articles on a focused topic and assigns each attendee to read one article. Then when we meet, the leader introduces the topic and thoroughly reviews their assigned journal article, followed by each attendee highlighting details from their reading. Dr. Jefferson facilitates a group discussion on the selected topic, including integration of findings across the articles reviewed to generate a perspective of the status of the literature (i.e., what do we know and what remains unknown).
Optional Didactics:

- **Department of Neurology Grand Rounds.** The Department of Neurology Grand Rounds consists of conferences, lectures, and seminars that cover a range of topics in both basic and clinical neuroscience and provide opportunity to interact formally and informally with faculty, fellows, and senior residents. Grand Rounds occurs weekly, on Friday morning. Once a month, Grand Rounds is combined with Neurosurgery, Neuropathology, and Neuroradiology.

- **Department of Psychiatry Grand Rounds.** Psychiatry Grand Rounds are intended for students, residents, faculty, and community physicians. Psychiatry Grand Rounds are held weekly on Thursday morning.

- **Brain Cuttings.** The Department of Pathology holds brain cutting seminars for residents and other trainees. These seminars include review of gross pathology, anatomy, and preparation of tissue for histopathology. Cases are varied in age and pathology. Seminars occur weekly on Wednesday mornings.

- **Department of Neurology Educational Conferences.** Dedicated educational conferences are held at noon each Tuesday (basic sciences), Wednesday (clinical neurophysiology), and Thursday (clinical neurology). A Chairman’s conference is also held on Thursday morning, just prior to the noon session. There is a Stroke conference each Wednesday morning, and various subspecialty conferences are scheduled intermittently. Journal Club meets twice monthly, and research dinners are held quarterly for informal discussion of basic and clinical sciences.

- **Center of Science Communication.** The Center for Science Communication at Vanderbilt aims both to help authors of basic biomedical research publish better papers in better journals and to help potential editors gain experience and improve their skills. The Center offers manuscript studios, one-on-one consulting, workshops and lectures, and customized help to potential editors.

- **VUIIS Scientific Communication Seminars.** In this seminar series, we explore scientific communication, a key component of the scientific process linking an idea to a published result: from formulating, describing, and defending a research plan; to communicating results in talks, posters, and journal articles.

- **Clinical and Translational Scientist Development.** Continued medical discovery and its translation into improved patient care depend on the continued development of well-trained physician and PhD-scientists. Over the last few years, the number of young scientists with career development funding at Vanderbilt and nationally has grown exponentially due to the success of institutionally- and NIH-funded career development programs. The Office for Clinical and Translational Scientist Development provides an integrated career development program for all physician-scientists, regardless of their scope of research, and for PhD-scientists engaged in translational or clinical research.

- **VUIIS Career Development Series.** The aim of this class series is to provide education in non-academic topics that are critical to success in the sciences and engineering. The seminars occur on an approximately quarterly basis and will include a variety of formats (e.g., lecture, panel discussion). Future topics will include “Finding a Job in Academia”, “Finding a Job in Industry”, “Gender Issues”, “Grant Writing”, and “Making a Successful Transition to Faculty Rank.”