



A Professional Development Program  
for Graduate Students and Postdoctoral Fellows  
Offered by the Teaching Resource Center

## Program Description

**Abstract:** Tomorrow's Professor Today (TPT) is a professional development program for graduate students and postdoctoral fellows designed to facilitate the transition from student to academic professional. The program focuses on improving preparedness in three key areas – teaching, professional development, and adjustment to a university career. Activities to support this endeavor include attending workshops, observing and interviewing faculty/administrators, preparing teaching documents, attending conferences, presenting research, and mentoring fellow participants. Participants will gain enhanced teaching abilities and credentials, be introduced to many of the responsibilities faced by university faculty and administrators, attain a more comprehensive understanding of how the various components (i.e., research, teaching, service) of their graduate or postgraduate experience relate to one another now and in their future careers, and be better prepared for the challenges they will face in their future careers at a university. Participants who complete the program are awarded a certificate and a letter certifying their successful completion of the program to add to their job application materials.

### I. Motivation and Purpose

Research has clearly documented the mismatch between graduate training and the numerous responsibilities facing new faculty.<sup>1</sup> For faculty on the tenure-track, responsibilities typically include the traditional triad of research, teaching, and service, while for non-tenure-track the primary focus may be teaching or administration. Regardless of the type of appointment, many agree that effective, comprehensive preparation for faculty careers is not widely available. In fact, new faculty consistently report being ill-prepared for their teaching responsibilities and surprised and overwhelmed by the variety of other demands placed on them.<sup>2</sup>

During the last decade, a number of national reform initiatives, including the National Doctoral Program Survey,<sup>3</sup> Carnegie Initiative on the Doctorate,<sup>4</sup> Re-envisioning the Ph.D.,<sup>5</sup> and the Preparing Future Faculty Program,<sup>6</sup> have examined the preparation graduate students receive for future faculty positions. All recommend that preparation for teaching be strengthened and that doctoral students be given more opportunities to explore innovative teaching techniques and fine-tune their teaching skills. Similarly, they recognize how important it is for future faculty to experience successively more independent and more varied teaching opportunities. Of the responsibilities new faculty take on, teaching often demands the most immediate attention and consumes the most time and energy. At the same time, many colleges and universities have increased the emphasis placed on the quality of teaching and often expect faculty to demonstrate creative techniques that effectively engage students and support learning. These reform initiatives also recommend that graduate students be given opportunities to learn about various other aspects of academic life in order to better prepare them for the wide range of roles that faculty play and to help them more clearly understand what life in academe entails. Finally, they advocate more robust and better-integrated professional development experiences for graduate students.

Tomorrow's Professor Today addresses all three of the major concerns – teaching preparation, professional development, and adjusting to life at the university – stressed by the initiatives. In general, the program will enhance the teaching skills and effectiveness of U.Va. graduate and professional students and postdocs while preparing them for the responsibilities and challenges they will face as future faculty members. We anticipate this program will attract participants who are either planning on a career in academia or who are interested in finding out more about such a career choice. By encouraging participants to document their teaching, this program will help establish patterns of reflection useful at all stages of their teaching careers. At the same time, the program will increase participants' awareness of issues affecting faculty and the University, provide

channels for mentoring and networking, and introduce them to general institutional dynamics that will enable a smoother transition from graduate school to a faculty position.

Ideally, participants will leave with pragmatic results – namely, a useful credential to add to their application packet or to discuss during the interview process – as well as more intangible, but equally important benefits:

- Enhanced teaching abilities and credentials
- An introduction to and appreciation of many of the responsibilities faced by university faculty and administrators
- A more comprehensive understanding of how the various components (i.e., research, teaching, service) of their graduate or postgraduate experience relate to one another now and in their future careers
- Being better prepared for the challenges they will face in their future careers at a university which may differ substantially from U.Va.

## II. Components

Participants will attend the TRC's annual August Teaching Workshop and May Teaching Portfolio workshop or annual portfolio informational session, and attend and report on 16 hours of additional workshops designed to help participants improve their teaching, develop as professionals, and learn about life at the university. These workshops should include at least one from each of the three distinct, but related, categories listed below. Participants will also document their teaching and other professional development experiences in the TPT Dossier.

Note: The program is designed to be completed within two years. Extending the length of time to completion is possible, but the program must be completed while still a graduate student or postdoc at U.Va. An accelerated program is available for special cases; contact the TRC for more information. For an overview of the program requirements, see the checklist and sample timeline (tabulated for a two-year completion time).

### 1) For the classroom – Activities designed to help participants improve their teaching.

- Attend ATW
- Attend and report on workshops on teaching and learning, including but not limited to JTW, other TRC workshops, departmental workshops, pedagogical workshops at national conferences, etc.
- Observe a faculty-taught undergraduate class and discuss with the faculty member his/her teaching choices in a follow-up meeting
- Course design
  - Prepare teaching documents: lesson plans, lecture notes, classroom/student assessment, etc.
  - Create an original syllabus, including learning objectives
- Accumulate at least 5 hours teaching experience by teaching your own class, discussion section or lab, by giving guest lectures or review sessions, or by leading a workshop on teaching
- Compose a Reflective Teaching Statement
- Arrange for a teaching consultation
  - Consult with a peer partner using the Peer Observation information
  - Consult with a TRC staff member by scheduling a TAP, videotape consultation, or classroom observation

### 2) For the Profession – Activities other than teaching designed to help participants develop as professionals.

- Attend and report on workshops on professional development, including but not limited to ones on
  - the job search
  - academic writing
  - integrating teaching and research
  - creating a teaching portfolio
  - alternate career options in academe, etc.
- Attend the biennial Teaching Portfolio workshop or a Teaching Portfolio informational session (offered at JTW)
- Attend a conference in your discipline

- Present your research at a conference or in a public forum (e.g., Departmental Colloquia, Graduate Research Symposium)
- Mentoring
  - Interview a faculty member about his/her career, about how to network, etc. See the Faculty Interview information for suggested questions.
  - Mentor a participant new to Tomorrow's Professor Today

### 3) At the University - Activities designed to help participants learn about life at the university.

- Attend and report on workshops on life in academe, including but not limited to "What is tenure and how do you get it?"; "What I wish I'd known when I took my first faculty position"; "What is service work and how much time should I devote to it?"
- Interview an administrator at U.Va. on matters such as how he/she came to position, how units of the university work together, and so on, using the Administrator Interview information.

### III. End Products

As a part of the TPT program, participants will produce the following:

- *Application, Statement of Goals and Commitment* – To be accepted into the program applicants must submit an application letter, a statement of individual goals and a declaration of commitment to the program. The application provides participants an opportunity to reflect on their motivations for entering the program while encouraging them to consider seriously their level of interest.
- *TPT Dossier* – Participants will collect the various documents produced throughout the course of the program into a dossier. The dossier not only serves as a record of accomplishment but also as a springboard for more formal documentation, such as that found in a teaching portfolio.
  - *Report sheets* – A series of documents based on participants' answers to a set of "scripted" questions. The questions are designed to document participation, guide interviews, shape peer observations, and promote reflection on workshops and other program initiatives.
    - Workshops
    - Interviews
    - Classroom Observations
    - Teaching Consultation
  - *Reflective writing* – Two short (2-page) essays written by participants expanding on some aspect, directly or indirectly, related to the program agenda. The essays allow participants to examine topics of interest and explore them in the context of their own teaching or professional development.
  - *Reflective Statement of Teaching* – A one to two page essay written by participants offering insight into some of the *whys* of teaching, including reflection about motivations, perspectives, and philosophies concerning the subject to which they dedicate themselves.
  - *Course Materials*: Sample teaching documents generated by participants, including original syllabus, samples of lesson plans, CATs, exams or assignments, and so on. The selected documents provide the participants the simulated experience of preparing and teaching a full course or allow those who have done so the opportunity to document it.
  - *Checklist and Advisor's Signature*: Upon completion of the program, each participant will obtain a signature from a faculty member in his/her department who has read through and approved the dossier. We recommend participants select their own advisors early in the program and show them pieces of the dossier as they are created.

Completed TPT Dossiers must be submitted to the TRC for final approval at least two weeks prior to the Awards Ceremony in order for a participant to receive a certificate.

### IV. Evaluation Process

- An advisor in each participant's department will be responsible for content and for signing off on the dossier. For more details on the advisor's role, see the Advisor Instructions & Checklist.

- The TRC will evaluate whether the dossier is complete. Upon completion of the program, participants will receive a Framed Certificate and a letter certifying their successful completion of the program.

- 
- <sup>1</sup> See, for example, Ann Austin and Donald H. Wulff. "The Challenge to Prepare the Next Generation of Faculty." *Paths to the Professoriate*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass. 2004. Association of American Universities. *Committee on Graduate Education: Report and Recommendations*. Washington, DC: Association of American Universities. 1998. Bridget Murray. "The Growth of the New PhD: Higher Education Takes a Hard Look at the PhD and Finds Much That Needs Changing." *Monitor on Psychology* (31). 2000. National Academy of Sciences, National Academy of Engineering & Institute of Medicine. *Enhancing the postdoctoral experience for scientists and engineers*. Washington DC: National Academy of Science. 2000. Scott Smallwood. "Survey Points to Mismatch in Doctoral Programs: PhD Students Aren't Trained for the Jobs That are Available." *The Chronicle of Higher Education*. 2001.
- <sup>2</sup> Ann E. Austin. "Preparing the Next Generation of Faculty: Graduate School as Socialization to the Academic Career." *The Journal of Higher Education* (73). 2002. Maresi Nerad, Rebecca Aanerud and Joseph Cerny. "'So You Want to Become a Professor!' Lessons from the PhDs – Ten Years Later Study." *Paths to the Professoriate*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass. 2004. Donald H. Wulff, Ann E. Austin, Jody D. Nyquist and Jo Sprague. "The Development of Graduate Students as Teaching Scholars." *Paths to the Professoriate*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass. 2004.
- <sup>3</sup> An on-line survey conducted in 2000 of 32,000 graduate students and recent PhDs from over 5000 doctoral programs in the US and Canada. See Adam Fagan and Kimberly M. Suedkamp Wells. "The 2000 National Doctoral Program Survey: An On-Line Study of Students' Voices." *Paths to the Professoriate*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass. 2004. For a compilation of survey results, see <http://survey.nagps.org/>.
- <sup>4</sup> The Carnegie Initiative on the Doctorate (CID) is a multi-year research and action project to support departments' efforts to more purposefully structure their doctoral programs. For more information, see George E. Walker. "The Carnegie Initiative on the Doctorate: Creating Stewards of Discipline." *Paths to the Professoriate*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass. 2004. For the most current information, see <http://www.carnegiefoundation.org/CID/>.
- <sup>5</sup> Re-envisioning the Ph.D. is an "environmental scan" of promising practices and concerns about the PhD, conducted with funding from The Pew Charitable Trusts. For more information, see Jody Nyquist and Bettina Woodford. "Re-envisioning the Ph.D. What Concerns Do We Have?" University of Washington: Center for Instructional Development and Research. 2000. (<http://depts.washington.edu/envision/>)
- <sup>6</sup> Preparing Future Faculty Program: Anne S. Pruitt-Logan and Jerry G. Gaff. "Preparing Future Faculty: Changing the Culture of Doctoral Education." *Paths to the Professoriate*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass. 2004. Jerry G. Gaff, Anne S. Pruitt-Logan & Richard A. Weibl. *Building the Faculty We Need: Colleges and Universities Working Together*. Association of American Colleges and Universities and the Council of Graduate Studies. 2000. Anne S. Pruitt-Logan, Jerry G. Gaff and Joyce E. Jentoft. *Preparing Future Faculty in the Sciences and Mathematics*. Council of Graduate Schools & AAC&U. 2002. Jerry G. Gaff, Anne S. Pruitt-Logan, Leslie B. Sims, Daniel D. Denecke *Preparing Future Faculty in the Humanities and Social Sciences*. Council of Graduate Schools & AAC&U. 2003. (<http://www.preparing-future-faculty.org>)