



Office of STEM Education UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA

Speaker Information

Norris Armstrong is an Associate Professor in the Department of Genetics and teaches introductory biology and introductory genetics. His research concentrates on adapting proven instructional approaches for use in large enrollment courses. He is currently examining strategies for improving assessment in large classes, active learning strategies, and undergraduate peer mentoring.

Justin Ballenger is an Assistant Professor of STEM Education in the Tift College of Education at Mercer University. Dr. Ballenger holds a B.S. in Biology, a Master's of Arts in Teaching (Science & Math), and a Ph.D. in Curriculum and Instruction (STEM) from Clemson University, Clemson, SC. Dr. Ballenger served as the Development Coordinator for the implementation of the Call Me MISTER Program at Jackson State University in Jackson, MS. This program works to recruit, train, and place males of color in middle and elementary schools. He also conducted research with the Clemson University Institute for Biological Interfaces of Engineering (IBIOE) to create inquiry-based lesson modules for middle school students. His current research is focused on leveraging sustainable partnerships among federal, programs, and community organizations to promote academic achievement among students from underserved populations and create pathways for those students to pursue STEM careers.

Ted Barco is the Director of UGA's Student Veterans Resource Center (SVRC). Prior to coming to UGA, Ted held a variety of leadership positions within the Federal Government to include, most recently, the Office of the Director of National Intelligence. Ted is a retired USAF Lt Col, who earlier in his career served with the Office of the Secretary of Defense, the Joint Staff, two Combat Support Agencies, Air University, and a variety of DoD schools and colleges.

Angela Birkes-Grier Angela Y. Birkes-Grier joined the University of Georgia as the Alliance Director for the Peach State Louis Stokes Alliance for Minority Participation (Peach State LSAMP) in the Office of Institutional Diversity in August 2010. The Peach State LSAMP program is funded by the National Science Foundation. As the Alliance Director, she manages and oversees the Alliance-wide activities for the program. In addition she provides fiscal management of the program budget and ensures that all reporting requirements are met.

Walt Bray is a senior Pre-medical student who currently serves as a Peer Learning Assistant Leader in Norris Armstrong's BIOL1107 course.

Laura Brewer is the coordinator of the Georgia Science & Engineering Fair.

Maite Ghazaleh is a PHD Student in the College of Public Health. She graduated from UNC Chapel Hill where she learned about the Scientific Research & Education Network (SciREN). Spring of 2016, Maite founded a SciREN Chapter in GA with two other graduate students. Her career goal is not only to produce knowledge in her field, but make that knowledge accessible to the general public.

Chase Hagood is the director of the Division of Academic Enhancement at the University of Georgia. At the DAE, Chase directs programs and initiatives that foster sustained student development while also creating partnerships and communities of support among students, faculty, staff, and administrators at the University. At the heart of his work, Chase endeavors to inspire meaningful conversations about student learning and success throughout the University. In addition to directing the work of programs like Freshman College Summer Experience and Coca-Cola First Generation Scholars and units like the Academic Resource Center, Collaborative Academic and Retention Effort (CARE), Intensive English Program, and TRIO-funded Upward Bound, Student Support Services, and Educational Talent Search, Chase serves as Co-Director of the UGA Reacting to the Past program—an exciting and award-winning pedagogy that transcends traditional disciplinary divisions and gives students a unique opportunity to engage in active learning.

Julianna Jeffers is an Academic Counselor at the Rankin Center, she works with the baseball and swimming and diving teams. Julianna also assists with the tutorial program as the payroll coordinator. She holds a master's degree in counseling psychology. She has given presentations to UGA's faculty and staff at the training and development center that focus on working with the student athlete population as effective advisors and educators.

Rachel Jones is the Associate Director for Academic Counseling and Co-Tutorial Coordinator. Rachel has worked with all elements of the tutoring program and started her career in academic support as a tutor. Rachel holds a master's degree in Counseling and Student Development and is a Professional Level Certified Coach through the International Coach Federation. She has given presentations to UGA's faculty and staff at the training and development center that focus on working with the student athlete population as effective advisors and educators.

Andrea Knapp is the Mathematics Education Outreach Coordinator at UGA and the Executive Director of the Math for Adults Foundation. Much of her outreach focuses on parental involvement in mathematics and accessing parents as intellectual resources for their children. She also currently directs lesson study activities among Clarke County School District mathematics teachers and UGA graduate students. Finally, she has coached K-12 teachers and trained graduate content specialist coaches in mathematics and science education. Dr. Knapp received her Ph.D. in mathematics education from Illinois State University.

Ashley Lall is a senior majoring in Biochemistry who currently serves as a Peer Learning Assistant Leader in Norris Armstrong's BIOL1107 course.

Paula Lemons, associate professor of biochemistry and molecular biology, conducts biology education research in the undergraduate context that informs faculty teaching practices and student learning. She is the Director of the UGA SEER (Scientists Engaged in Education Research) Center that facilitates cutting-edge research in the field of STEM education through multi-disciplinary interactions and research collaborations among a community of scientists from different colleges and departments and the medical partnership.

Meg Mittelstadt is the Assistant Director of Faculty Development and Recognition in the Center for Teaching and Learning. She received her Ph.D. in Molecular, Cellular, and Developmental Biology from the University of South Carolina. She recently joined the CTL after serving as Director of Training and Education for the Landry Cancer Biology Consortium at Harvard University.

Jim Moore serves as the Director of Educational Resources, the department in the College of Veterinary Medicine that creates educational materials for use in the curriculum. Educational Resources includes staff members with expertise in medical illustration, 3D modeling and animation, photography/videography, and interactive media design and development. Before assuming his current role, Jim served the College as an equine surgeon, research investigator, and department head. He currently is a Meigs Distinguished Teaching Professor and Distinguished Research Professor.

Naomi Norman is Associate Vice President for Instruction at UGA. She works on various curriculum and student success initiatives.

Norbert Pienta conducts research and scholarship about the teaching and learning of chemistry. He devises methods, instruments (i.e., means of data collection), and analytics (e.g., patterns, pathways, and strategies) for student learning. He is Professor in the UGA Department of Chemistry and the Editor-in-Chief of the Journal of Chemical Education.

Brian Stone, Georgia Center for Continuing Education, The Office of Public Service and Outreach, is the program coordinator for Summer Academy at UGA, an academic-focused summer camp held on UGA's campus. Summer Academy offers more than 40 camps, including many in STEM fields like Engineering, Math, Architecture, Medicine, and Environmental Science. Brian previously served on the Georgia 4-H state staff, coordinating statewide military family and youth programs. He retired from the Air Force in 2012 as a lieutenant colonel. He lives in Athens with his wife, Valerie, and eight year old son, Eli.

Vonae Tanner is a math education innovator specializing in teaching math through project-based discovery and movement. She is the founder of MathMindWorkshop.com, a company focused on teaching STEM-driven math through investigation, exploration, and large motor movement; a company that focuses on making math an equally represented science in STEM. Vonae has taught math and physical science in middle and high school in both public and private schools. For more than 15 years Vonae has also worked in curriculum design. As part of her work for online education companies like NetSchools, Edmentum, Academic Benchmarks, and Shmoop, she read all 50 state math standards in the pre-Common Core world, the Common Core Standards, and most math textbooks. Throughout the years she has written, aligned, and edited a wide variety of educational resources that incorporate technology in the math classroom.

She is currently partnering with RUSH Athens and X-drenaline of East Cobb to host STEM camps on "The Science of Trampolines" which connects math, physics, and movement for 2nd through 8th graders. She teaches an advanced math camp at the UGA Summer Academy titled "Fibonacci, Fractals, and 4-D," and dabbles in mathematical urban photography on the side.

Courtney Thomas is a Masters student in Dr. Mary Ann Moran's microbial ecology lab. She is currently researching molecular exchanges between marine microbes. She graduated from the Northwest Missouri State University in 2015, with BS in Marine Biology, and will graduate from the UGA Marine Science department with a Master's degree in August 2017. She is co-Founder of SciREN Georgia.

Joachim Walther is an associate professor of engineering education research at the University of Georgia and the Founding Director of the Engineering Education Transformations Institute (EETI) in the College of Engineering. This cross-cutting institute fuses high quality engineering education research with systematic educational innovation to transform the educational experiences of engineering students. Dr. Walther is the recipient of over \$2 million of engineering education research funding and has published numerous articles in prestigious engineering education research journals and at international conferences in the field. His work has been recognized through multiple university-level, national, and international awards including the Presidential Early Career Award for Scientists and Engineers (PECASE), the highest honor bestowed by the US government upon Engineers and Scientists in the early stages of their careers. Dr. Walther's interdisciplinary research program that includes researchers from education, art, educational psychology, and social work spans the areas interpretive research methods, the professional formation of engineers, the role of empathy and reflection in engineering learning, and engineering students' creativity development.

Eddie Watson is the Director of the Center for Teaching and Learning and a Fellow in the Institute for Higher Education at the University of Georgia. He teaches courses on college teaching, student learning, and course design and is the Executive Editor of the *International Journal of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education*. Eddie has been recently interviewed and quoted in the *Chronicle of Higher Education*, *the New York Times*, *CNN*, *NPR*, *Campus Technology*, *EdSurge*, and *University Business Magazine* regarding current teaching and learning issues and trends in higher education. His most recent book, *Teaching Naked Techniques: A Practical Guide to Designing Better Classes*, was published in January. Another book, *Playing to Learn with Reacting to the Past: Research on High Impact, Active Learning Practices*, will be out later this year.

Janet Westpheling is a Professor in the Department of Genetics at the University of Georgia. Her current research is focused on the development of genetic technologies for micro-organisms that convert lignocellulosic biomass to biofuels and industrial chemicals and is funded by grants from the Department of Energy. She is a member of the Board of Directors of the Society for Industrial Microbiology, a member of the Scientific Advisory Board of the Society for Biological Engineering and was an author of the 2006 report from the National Research Council, "Review of the Department of Energy's Genomics: GTL Program". She is an Activity Lead and member of the BioEnergy Science Center, Oak Ridge National Laboratory/Department of Energy and two time winner of the UGARF Creative Research Medal. She holds patents for microbial genetic technologies and is an active consultant to industries involved in the metabolic engineering of micro-organisms for the production of fuels, chemicals and pharmaceuticals. As part of her role in the BioEnergy Science Center she has lead an educational outreach program for elementary and middle school STEM education.

Marc Williams is the CEO of Williams Communications, LLC. He is a: Scholar, Educator, Inspirational Speaker, Author, Film Maker and Entrepreneur. Dr. Williams is widely regarded as a Sports Marketing Pioneer and Pop Culture Expert. He worked for three of the largest sports brands in the world: Champs Sports, Footaction and Reebok. He was responsible for helping Champs Sports become a Billion Dollar brand. His insights have been featured in media outlets: Forbes, Wall Street Journal and USA Today. He has worked with Sports and Entertainment icons such as: Michael Jordan, Venus Williams, Kobe Bryant, Beyonce, Will Farel and Jay Z. Dr. Williams is the author of the Art of Networking and Directed two films: An ESPN 30 For 30 Documentary on Boston Celtic Legend Jo Jo White and The History of Umass Basketball. He also mentors some of the nations' top Student Athletes: Deshaun Watson and Christian McCaffery.

Williams is currently a fellow at Harvard University's prestigious Med School, focusing on athletes and entertainers being advocates for cancer research. He is also the Sports & Health Program Chair for the Harvard University Medical School Global Health Catalyst Summit. Dr. Williams received his Doctorate in Education from West Virginia University and his Masters in Sports Management from the University of Massachusetts.