

Spring 2017 Graduate Seminar Series Modernizing Graduate Education for Tomorrow's STEM Workforce

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Wednesday, January 18, 2017, 4:10 pm, 1140 Howe Hall



Abstract

Most students enrolled in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) graduate programs hope to follow in the footsteps of their advisors. Yet, as students progress through their graduate programs, their interest in academic careers often wanes. Moreover, those still attracted to academia face a tightening job market and often struggle to land a coveted tenure-track position, resulting in less than half of all STEM PhD recipients holding academic appointments. This shift in career opportunities and outcomes has led many organizations, professional societies, and government agencies to question whether the current graduate education system adequately prepares students for today's marketplace. The presentation will review the results of several recent studies on the state of STEM graduate education and highlight the importance of interdisciplinary training and transferable skill development in preparing graduate students for a range of STEM research and research-related fields.

About the Speaker

Richard Tankersley is the Associate Dean for Research and Graduate Education and Professor of Biological Sciences in the College of Liberal Arts & Sciences at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte. He received his B.A. in Biology from Wake Forest University, M.S. in Marine Biology from Florida State University, and Ph.D. in Biology from Wake Forest University. Dr. Tankersley previously served as Professor of Biological Sciences at the Florida Institute of Technology. Prior to joining UNC-Charlotte, Professor Tankersley was Lead Program Director of the National Science Foundation Research Traineeship (NRT) Program (2014-2016) and Program Director of the Integrative Graduate Education and Research Traineeship (IGERT) Program (2012-2016) at the National Science Foundation.

In his current position as Associate Dean, Professor Tankersley works with faculty, graduate program directors, department chairs, other deans, and executive officers to administer the 39 graduate degree and certificate programs in the College. He also oversees the College's research enterprise and works with faculty and administrative staff to promote both disciplinary and interdisciplinary research, strengthen the University's ties to federal agencies and policymakers, and grow the University's research portfolio and infrastructure.

Professor Tankersley's research interests include invertebrate behavior and physiology, larval ecology, global change biology, ocean acidification, science education, and science communication. For over 23 years Tankersley has taught courses in Invertebrate Zoology, Marine Ecology, Statistics, Experimental Design, and Communicating Science.