



PRESENTER BIOS

FSLI RESIDENTIAL SESSION

**North Carolina State
University**

October 12-16, 2025

Biography

Benjamin Alig **Senior Research Associate, Zoetis**

Dr. Benjamin Alig is from Wake Forest, North Carolina, and is proud to be a triple alumnus of North Carolina State University. He earned his Bachelor of Science in Poultry Science in 2018, followed by a Master of Science in 2020, and completed his Ph.D. in Animal and Poultry Science in 2023, all from NC State.



Benjamin takes great pride in his unique journey to NC State, where after being initially denied admission as a high school senior, he chose to spend a year at community college to strengthen his academic skills—laying a strong foundation that set him up for lasting success. Through the STEAM transfer program, he began at NC State as a sophomore and quickly distinguished himself. He co-authored *The Learning Curve* (edited by Jim Cain) and

Virtual Facilitation (edited by John Berkley and Jeff Goldberg). By his senior year, his dedication and hard work earned him the CALS Outstanding Senior Award for scholarship, reflecting his remarkable growth and commitment.

His time in undergrad was enriched by hands-on internships and study abroad experiences that broadened his global perspective on agriculture and animal science practices. During graduate school, Benjamin's research focused on laying hen environments and the effect on welfare and behavior. He also took a special interest in data analysis and statistics.

Currently, Benjamin works as a Senior Research Associate at Zoetis, a global animal health company based in Durham, North Carolina. At Zoetis, he focuses on biodevice development and validation, running outcomes research studies on poultry vaccines. His work has contributed to advancements in sustainable poultry health, earning him the 2024 Zoetis Excellence Award in Sustainability and the 3Rs. Benjamin has also published seven papers stemming from his thesis and dissertation research.

Beyond his professional and academic pursuits, Benjamin enjoys beer brewing, ice hockey, and running. He remains engaged with the Poultry Science Association and finds great reward in mentoring current students and sharing his experiences within the poultry industry.

Benjamin's advice to students is simple yet powerful: "Keep learning. Even after college, never stop expanding your knowledge. Show the world you can learn anything, and you'll prove you can do anything."

Biography

John Berkley
President, Competitive Edge, Inc.

John's style is dynamic and engaging, focused mainly on learning through his own blend of coaching, experiential activities, tools, storytelling and energy healing. Clients comment on John's knowledge and passion for his work. He is authentically curious and truly loves what he does and cares for the people he works with. The special part of working with John is in the way he empowers people by working with both their head and their hearts to make meaningful change. After years of practice, John has honed his empathic skills and has been able to go deeper with clients through energy healing.



All of John's work is custom designed for each individual or group. John has planned and facilitated customized programs with global organizations including: Bank of America, Wells Fargo, BB&T, WEX, Community Health Systems, AT&T, Sara Lee, GMAC, Ingersoll-Rand, and Duke University's Fuqua School of Business. John is a graduate of Rice University, with a BS in mechanical engineering and has completed an executive coaching certificate through Duke University.

During COVID, John founded the Berkley Virtual Facilitator Practice Group of over 80 international facilitators who wanted to explore how to create magic while facilitating groups virtually. The practice group created many models and virtual content that led to publishing two books, *The Learning Curve* (edited by Jim Cain) and *Virtual Facilitation* (edited by John Berkley and Jeff Goldberg).

Biography

Jennifer Daniels ***President, North Carolina Pork Council***

Jennifer Daniels is from rural Sampson County, North Carolina and has been happily married for over 30 years to Todd. They have three grown children and two grand daughters. She is an active member of Union Grove Baptist Church in Salemburg, along with being active in several other organizations as well.



Jennifer Daniels is the Production and Compliance Manager for H & D Farms, Inc. and Windy Creek Farms, Inc., both near Autryville, North Carolina.

She and Todd own both farms that have nurseries for pigs and turkeys and raise certified seed sweet potatoes, tobacco and small grains.

Jennifer is an advocate for farming and serves on agriculture boards such as the NC AG foundations board, North Carolina Tobacco Trust Fund and is the former President of the North Carolina Pork Council.

Biography

John Dole ***Director, FSLI***

Dr. John Dole grew up in the horticulturally rich area of West Michigan, which inspired his life-long career in agriculture. In his younger days, he picked strawberries, raspberries, and apples as well as planted and harvested gladiolus for local farm market stands and worked for a local dairy. He was an avid 4-H'er, becoming a state winner and attending the National 4-H Congress.

Dr. Dole began his higher education at Grand Rapids Community College and transferred to Michigan State University for his BS in Horticulture. He worked in California at the Paul Ecke Ranch prior to his PhD from the University of Minnesota. Dole was on the faculty of Oklahoma State University for eleven years before moving to NC State in 2000. He became Director of Graduate Programs for the Horticultural Science Department in 2004 and Head of the Department in 2011.



For six years, Dr. Dole served as Associate Dean for Academic Programs, before serving as interim Dean of the College of Agriculture and Life Science from 2022 – 2023. As Associate Dean, Dole worked to increase educational access for all students, especially those from rural areas and from underrepresented backgrounds, and increase number of students entering the majors most in need of students to meet employer demand. He started the CALS Online Academy, launched the national FFAR Fellows program, and championed new certificates and degree programs to update CALS academic programs.

In July 2024, Dr. Dole became the Director of the Food System Leadership Institute (FSLI), which provides executive leadership education for food and agricultural professionals in higher education, industry, NGOs and government. FSLI was nurtured and launched by the Association of Public and Land Grant Universities and is overseen by the FSLI Commission. As a member of Cohort 11, he is a proud alumnus of FSLI.

Dr. Dole's research focuses on the production and postharvest physiology of floriculture crops, in particular, working with cut flowers, poinsettias, and vegetatively-propagated cuttings. Dole authored or co-authored eight books, over 100 refereed journal articles, and more than 300 industry publications. He has mentored over 20 MS and PhD students and advised hundreds of undergraduate students. He serves as Executive Advisor of the Association of Specialty Cut Flower Growers, a 3,000 member national organization, and was previously President of the American Society for Horticultural Science.

Dole is one of the founding members of Seed Your Future, whose mission is to inspire people to pursue careers working with plants. This public private partnership between universities, ASHS and Longwood Gardens has grown to become a full-fledged national movement and organization.

Biography

Claudia S. Plaisted Fernandez DrPH, MS, RD, LDN
FSLI Leadership Core Director

Claudia Fernandez is a professor at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill at the Gillings School of Global Public Health, the top- ranked public school of public health in the country. She currently serves as the Director of Executive Leadership Development for UNC. She specializes in helping leaders meet the challenges of running complex organizations, communicating to public and media audiences, and engaging employees. She is the co- author of *It-Factor Leadership: Become a Better Leader in 13 Steps*.



Dr. Fernandez has extensive experience developing custom executive education programs that focus on personal leadership development, innovation, and business

skills for senior, middle, and front-line managers and leaders. For the past 22 years she has served as the Director of the Leadership Core for the Food Systems Leadership Institute (www.FSLI.org), the flagship leadership program of the Association of Public and Land Grant Universities (APLU) serving academic Deans, Heads, and Vice Presidents, industry and government leaders. For the past 19 years she has directed the ACOG International Leadership Institute for the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, and for eight years she served as Co-Director and Co-PI for the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation funded Clinical Scholars National Leadership Institute (ClinicalScholarsNLI.org). She is an executive coach and certified in a wide range of leadership and psychological assessment tools, including 360 assessments, the EQi-2.0 Emotional Intelligence Instrument, the FIRO-B, the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator, the Change Style Indicator, the Decision Style Profile, the Paper Planes, Inc. simulation, the Thomas Kilmann Conflict Instrument, the Dennison Organizational Culture Survey, The FourSight tool, The Influence Style Indicator, the Poverty Simulation, and the CPI 260 and the Coaching Report for Leaders.

Dr. Fernandez is also a licensed and Registered Dietitian, and as such has a particular interest in leadership in healthcare systems and high-performing healthcare and public health teams. She earned her doctorate in public health leadership and health policy from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

Dr. Fernandez is also a two-time national literary finalist in fiction, in 2023 and 2024, writing under the pen name Ci Ci Soleil.

You can contact Claudia at Claudia_Fernandez@unc.edu

Biography

Garey Fox
Dean, North Carolina State University
College of Agriculture and Life Sciences

Garey Fox became the dean of North Carolina State University's College of Agriculture and Life Sciences (CALS) on Aug. 1, 2023. Fox joined NC State in 2017 as a professor and head of the Department of Biological and Agricultural Engineering at CALS. He has over 10 years of administrative experience and 20 years of academic experience in research, teaching and outreach focused on surface water and groundwater interaction related to water quantity and quality.



Before joining NC State, Fox worked at Oklahoma State University as a professor and the Orville L. and Helen L. Buchanan Chair in Biosystems Engineering for the Department of Biosystems and Agricultural Engineering. Concurrently, he was the director and Berry Endowed Professor at Oklahoma State's Water Resources Center. He was previously a faculty member at the University of Mississippi.

Fox's research focuses on surface water and groundwater interaction with applications for stream bank erosion and failure, sediment and nutrient transport, and the design of vegetative filter strips and riparian buffers. His work has been supported by the National Science Foundation, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, the U.S. Geological Survey and the U.S. Department of Agriculture. He has published approximately 150 peer-reviewed articles in several refereed journals and served as principal investigator or co-principal investigator on grant-funded projects totaling over \$27 million.

Fox was named the first editor-in-chief of the American Society of Agricultural and Biological Engineers (ASABE) journals, a position he held for four years. He served on the ASABE Board of Trustees from 2019-2022, was honored as an ASABE Fellow in 2020 and received the society's presidential leadership citation the same year. He was recognized with ASABE's James and Karen Gilley Academic Leadership Award in 2021.

Fox earned bachelor's and master's degrees in agricultural engineering from Texas A&M University and a doctorate in civil engineering from Colorado State University.

Biography

David Henard
Professor of Marketing
Poole College of Management, NC State

David Henard is Professor of Marketing and Business Management at North Carolina State University's Poole College of Management. He is the past Marketing Area Coordinator, Director of International Programs, and Director of Graduate Programs at Poole College.

Prior to entering academics, Professor Henard had a career with multiple food divisions of Kraft Foods USA where he held numerous R&D, sales, and marketing positions.



He is a highly cited business scholar whose research activity centers mainly on knowledge management and new product development issues. He is professionally certified in both negotiation and mediation, which is the professional role that brings him to us today.

Biography

Matthew Interis ***Cohort 20 Fellow***

Matthew Interis is Associate Dean for Academic Affairs in the College of Agriculture, Forestry and Life Sciences at Clemson University. In this role, he provides leadership for the college's operating budget and academic programs, while advancing faculty success and guiding initiatives that ensure undergraduate students have a transformative academic journey. His unit supports the full arc of the student experience—from recruitment and orientation, to student success and leadership development, to life after graduation—helping students grow into capable, well-rounded leaders who make an impact in their communities and beyond.



Interis joined Clemson in 2023 after 14 years at Mississippi State University, where he served as professor and graduate coordinator in the Department of Agricultural Economics. During his time there, he received multiple teaching awards at the department, college, and professional association levels, mentored undergraduate researchers, and helped manage the university's signature first-year and upper-level student leadership programs.

As a scholar, his expertise is in the use of discrete choice econometrics for purposes of environmental non-market valuation and consumer choice analysis. In practical terms, his research helps estimate the economic value of environmental changes—such as restoration of coastal habitat, improved surface water quality, or reduced resource use in food systems. He has published extensively in leading journals, received national recognition for his research, and held elected leadership positions in several professional associations.

Before his academic career, Interis dedicated several years to service through AmeriCorps, YouthBuild, and the Smokey House Center, where he worked with underserved youth to strengthen local communities. This foundation in service continues to shape his approach as both an educator and a leader.

Biography

Sarah Hardison Kotzian ***Program Manager, FSLI***

Dr. Sarah Kotzian serves as Program Manager for the Food Systems Leadership Institute (FSLI), where she partners with the Director to deliver this nationally recognized leadership program. In this role, she leads recruiting efforts, collaborates with secondary sites, and manages participant communications. Sarah also cultivates professional relationships across all program levels, while coordinating communication strategies and overseeing marketing initiatives to advance FSLI's mission.



Before joining the FSLI team, Sarah spent 18 years with North Carolina 4-H, where she provided leadership for statewide Youth and Adult Citizenship Engagement Programs. She directed cornerstone initiatives such as NC 4-H Congress and Citizenship North Carolina Focus, and she also led the North Carolina 4-H Volunteer Program. Sarah is certified in multiple leadership assessments, including the DiSC assessment and the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator, and is a Certified CliftonStrengths Coach.

A North Carolina native, Dr. Kotzian holds a B.A. in Psychology, an M.Ed. in Adult and Community College Education, and a Ph.D. in Educational Research and Policy Analysis, all from North Carolina State University.

You can contact Sarah at Sarah_Kotzian@ncsu.edu.

Biography

Kenrett Y. Jefferson-Moore ***Cohort 20 Fellow***

Kenrett Y. Jefferson-Moore, Ph.D. is a professor and chairperson of the Department of Agribusiness, Applied Economics and Agriscience Education (AAEAE) and Director of the HBCU Agriculture Business Innovation Center at North Carolina A&T State University in Greensboro, North Carolina. She has served as the Chair of AAEAE since January 2019, where she manages departmental budgets, operations, personnel, academic programs, and research portfolio. Dr. Jefferson-Moore's research interests include the economic and market evaluation of local and organic foods, value-added agriculture, and specialty crops. She has also collaborated on several projects across 1890 and 1862 land-grant institutions and USDA agencies.



She serves as chair and 1890 LGCU representative on the USDA NAREEE Advisory Board from 2017 to 2020 (first term) and was reappointed for a second term from 2022 – 2025. She will end her second term this September 2025. She also serves as chair of the Southern Extension and Research Activity (SERA-47), which is an Integrated multi-disciplinary, multi-state group to holistically address high-priority issues related to local and regional food systems in the South.

Dr. Jefferson-Moore's FSLI project entails successfully launching and raising the national visibility profile of the Agriculture Business Innovation Center (ABIC) at North Carolina A&T State University, which serves as an administrative hub of a multi-institutional collaboration between Alabama A&M University, Kentucky State University, and West Virginia State University. The primary goal of ABIC is to increase the number of successful agricultural businesses by providing technical assistance through collaborative efforts across the nation with enhanced knowledge and skills of agricultural business owners to plan, create, develop, and fund ventures

Biography

James Johnson Jr.

William R. Kenan Jr. Distinguished Professor of Strategy and Entrepreneurship and Director, Urban Investment Strategies Center

James H. Johnson Jr. is the William R. Kenan Jr. Distinguished Professor of strategy and entrepreneurship in the Kenan-Flagler Business School and director of the Urban Investment Strategies Center in the Frank Hawkins Kenan Institute of Private Enterprise at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. His research interests include community and economic development, the effects of demographic changes on the U.S. workplace, interethnic minority conflict in advanced industrial societies, poverty and public policy in urban America, and workforce diversity issues.



He has published more than 100 scholarly research articles and three research monographs and has co-edited four theme issues of scholarly journals on these and related topics. Currently he is researching strategies to combat hyper-segregation, persistent and concentrated poverty, and gentrification-induced residential and economic dislocations in U.S. cities. And he currently works with gentrifying cities to develop roadmaps for inclusive and equitable economic development that creates shared prosperity. Fast Company profiled him in “Hopes and Dreams.”

He received his PhD from Michigan State University, his MS from the University of Wisconsin at Madison and his BS from North Carolina Central University.

Biography

Mitch Owen ***Founder and CEO of Mitchen Incorporate***

Dr. Mitchell (Mitch) B. Owen is the Chief Operating Officer of Mitchen Incorporate, an innovative training and organizational development company celebrating over thirty-three years of service to its clients. Dr. Owen has also served as the Deputy Director for Performance and Organization Development with the North Carolina Department of Public Safety and as the Director of Personal and Organizational Development at North Carolina State University in Raleigh, N.C., USA.



Dr. Owen is the creator of the Elusive Leadership™ model for high performance team development and the Mitchen Organization Strategic Positioning System™. Dr. Owen's expertise and reputation has enabled him to work with a wide variety of groups, including universities, public agencies, non-profits, as well as business and industry. Most recently, facilitating strategic plans at University of Arizona, University of Hawai'i, University of Georgia, University of Tennessee, University of Tuskegee, Michigan State University, and The Ohio State University. Selected other clients include: Volvo Car Finance Inc, BioGen IDEC, United Auto Workers, General Motors, N.B. Handy Company, City of Raleigh, Ohio Department of Natural Resources, Montgomery County Maryland, Mecklenburg County, Maryland Department of Agriculture, Cupertino County California, North Carolina Conservation Trust, The Saint Constantine School, North Carolina A&T State University, North Carolina State University, University of Connecticut, University of Maryland, University of North Carolina, Texas A&M University, and Louisiana State University. Dr. Owen also serves on the Metropolis Council for the Holy Metropolis of Atlanta of the Orthodox Church.

Dr. Owen completed his Doctorate of Education at North Carolina State University in Adult Education and Development while focusing his research on the psychology of change and technology adoption. Dr. Owen completed his degree in plant science and a masters in agriculture mechanization and business at Clemson University. He is internationally respected as a leader in programs on leadership, performance, strategic planning, facilitation, organizational development, branding, technology, cultural agility, collaboration, and organizational change.

Biography

M. Todd See

Department Head, Animal Science, NC State

Dr. See joined the faculty in the Department of Animal Science at North Carolina State University in 1992 as an Extension Swine Specialist and has served as Head of the department since 2008. A recognized expert in swine genetics and production, his career is dedicated to advancing the food animal industry. As Head he provides leadership for 40 faculty and extension professionals and nearly 1000 students enrolled in Animal Science. He coordinates research functions in genetics, nutrition, physiology, and management and extension programs in swine, beef cattle, dairy cattle, small ruminants and equine.



He also supervises and provides budgetary oversight for NC State's animal educational units. Dr. See has published 84 peer-reviewed publications, given over 125 invited presentations around the world, and has authored over 500 articles and other publications. Todd was a member of Cohort 10 of the Food Systems Leadership Institute and Class 4 of LEAD 21. He has had many professional recognitions but is most proud to have been named a Fellow of the American Society of Animal Science, receiving the Distinguished Service Award from the National Pork Board, and being named the recipient of the National Pork Board Swine Industry Award for Innovation on four occasions.

Biography

Bob Treadway ***Treadway & Associates***

Bob Treadway is a globally-praised advisor on forecasting, strategy, and leadership development. He believes foresight and anticipation strongly enhance a leader's effectiveness and value.

He serves as faculty for industry programs in financial services, agriculture, food, telecommunications, information security, commercial construction, healthcare, audit, and government. Eight US and Canadian universities and colleges count him as lecturer and adjunct faculty. His instruction includes sessions with the University of California, Ohio State, Kansas State, NC State, Oregon State, the Food Systems Leadership Institute, Syngenta's Leadership at Its Best, and multiple leadership programs with crop associations and commissions in the US and Canada.



Clients like Berkshire Hathaway, Motorola, Hilton, Gillette, ExxonMobil, American Express, the Social Security Administration, US Gypsum, the National League of Cities, and the Howard Hughes Medical Institute also retain Treadway to help them develop long-range thinking, forecast environments of tomorrow, develop robust strategy, and take action on what is ahead.

Most of his practice is executive sessions with governance and top management in think tank, brainstorming, future visioning, decision-making, and strategic planning projects. He has advised trade negotiators on the long-term future, financial examiners on how to evaluate strategy, telecommunications companies on uses for unlimited broadband, a multi-national agribusiness company on the 20-year future of weed control, and wealthy family foundations on how to get the greatest return on their philanthropy.

Bob has worked in-depth and facilitated strategy and decision-making meetings with dozens of food-oriented businesses, agriculture associations, government agencies and ministries, agribusiness firms, cooperatives, and academic institutions. His ag clients include the National Corn Growers Association, Quaker Oats, Ocean Spray, American Soybean Association, Grain Growers of Canada, Syngenta, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, the US Grains Council, Pulse Canada, The Iowa Pork Industry Center, National Pork Board, Ag Retailers Association, the EPA, Alberta Beef, GROWMARK, Butterball Farms, and Mission Foods.

Bob is especially involved in leadership education in agriculture. He's been a top-rated educator with Syngenta's Leadership at Its Best, instructed for the Food Systems Leadership Institute, and taught sessions with the National Corn Growers, Alberta Canola, Manitoba Canola, Ag Future of America, and the Canadian Association of Ag-Retailing.

Before moving into futurism, forecasting, leadership education, and consulting, Bob was an executive and principal owner in the broadcasting and software industries. His background also includes career segments as a civil engineer, college professor, business broker, and advertising agency principal. He was educated in Europe and the U.S. and holds degrees in engineering, liberal arts, and mass communications.

Biography

Bryon Wiegand ***Cohort 20 Fellow***

Dr. Bryon Wiegand is a native of Cairo, Missouri and is currently Professor of Animal Science at the University of Missouri. He has taught Animal Products, Beef Production, and Physiology and Biochemistry of Muscle. Dr. Wiegand's research focuses on fat quality of food animals as well as pre- and post-natal influencers of growth and body composition. Bryon served as a Technical Advisor to the Missouri Association of Meat Processors, Supervises the MU Collegiate Meats Judging Team, and oversees operation of the Mizzou Meat Market (a full-line meat processing plant under USDA inspection). In 2015, he assumed the role of State Meats Extension Specialist. Bryon has been recognized by his peers with multiple national teaching awards, most notably two career teaching honors, the American Society of Animal Science Distinguished Teacher Award, and the American Meat Science Association Distinguished Teacher Award.



Dr. Wiegand was named a Kemper Teaching Fellow at the University of Missouri in 2014. Bryon was appointed as Associate Division Director in Animal Science in 2019 where he was responsible for coordinating research farms and auxiliary units as well as outreach from Animal Science to stakeholders in Missouri and beyond. Bryon has served as the Director of Animal Science since May 2021.

Specific areas of expertise include:

- Meat Quality and Yield
- Fat Quality and Metabolism
- Food Animal Production Systems

Education & Professional Development:

- Iowa State University (PhD Meat Science/Muscle Biology)
- Auburn University (MS Quantitative Genetics)
- University of Missouri (BS Animal Science)
- LEAD 21 (2019)
- Food Systems Leadership Institute (FSLI) (2024-25)