

Speaker Bios

Kathryn J. Boor

Kathryn J. Boor is the Dean of the Graduate School and Vice Provost for Graduate Education at Cornell University. Previously, she was the Ronald P. Lynch Dean of the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences at Cornell University. Her research focuses on identifying biological factors that affect transmission of bacteria in food systems. Dr. Boor is a Fellow of the American Academy of Microbiology, the International Academy of Food Science and Technology, the Institute of Food Technologists, the American Association for the Advancement of Science, and the American Dairy Science Association. She was named a 2018 Woman of Distinction by the New York State Senate. She earned an MS in food science from the University of Wisconsin and a PhD in microbiology from the University of California, Davis. She serves on the Board of Directors for Seneca Foods Corporation, International Flavors and Fragrance, the United States-Israel Binational Agricultural Research and Development Fund, the Foundation for Food and Agriculture Research, the Science Board for the US Food and Drug Administration, and the New York State Southern Tier Regional Economic Development Council. She served on the National Academy of Sciences Committee on Review of the Use of Scientific Criteria and Performance Standards for Safe Food.

John J. Classen

John Classen is Associate Professor and Director of Graduate Programs in Biological and Agricultural Engineering at North Carolina State University. He earned B.S. and M.S. degrees from the University of Arkansas in Agricultural Engineering and a Ph.D. degree from Texas A&M University in Agricultural Engineering.

Since joining NC State in 1995, John Classen has worked to improve animal manure management in North Carolina, focusing on nutrient recovery and reuse, and the physical, chemical, or biological processes that can facilitate those goals. Recognizing that environmental technology adoption is part of a complex socio-technical system, he is adapting methods to incorporate input from a variety of stakeholders into the technology design process, leading to more robust designs and broader acceptance of new technologies, processes, and policies. He is also an advocate for collaborative research and the need for graduate students to participate in such collaborations.

In his role as Director of Graduate Programs, John Classen is committed to diversity, equity, and inclusion in graduate education. His efforts are centered on the professional as well as technical development of students and he advocates for practices that support their mental health. He is a Fellow of the North Carolina Alliance for Graduate Education and the Professoriate, AGEP-NC, an NSF-funded effort to create institutional, department-level, and faculty changes leading to success of underrepresented minority doctoral students and their progression into faculty positions. He is concentrating on inclusive mentoring practices and opportunities to share those practices with faculty mentors.

E.J. Jones

Edwin Jones is the director of Virginia Cooperative Extension and associate dean of the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences. He has served in that role since April 2011.

Prior to that he served as associate director and state program leader for Agriculture, Natural Resources, and Community and Rural Development; associate state program leader for Agriculture, Natural Resources, and Community and Rural Development; assistant department head and department extension leader in forestry; and as extension wildlife specialist and professor of forestry at NC State University. He has also served as extension wildlife specialist at Mississippi State University.

Jones has a bachelor's degree in zoology from the University of Washington, and Master of Science and a doctoral degree from Virginia Tech in fisheries and wildlife science. He has held leadership positions in the Extension Disaster Education Network, the National Association of Community Development Extension Professionals, and the Southern Region Program Leader Network.

Moses T. Kairo

Moses Kairo is Professor, Dean and Director of Land Grant Programs in the School of Agricultural and Natural Sciences at the University of Maryland Eastern Shore (UMES). Prior to joining UMES, he was Professor of entomology and Director of the Center for Excellence in Biological Control at Florida A&M University for nearly seven years. He also served as the Associate Research Director for their 1890 Land-Grant Institutions programs. Dr. Kairo has previously worked for CABI, an international development organization, where he served as the lead scientist and regional representative of the organization's activities in the Caribbean and Latin America region. His research interests have focused on biological control, invasive species management and crop protection. Over the years, he has carried out work in Africa, Europe, the Middle East, Latin America and the Caribbean. He has served the land-grant community through various bodies or committees of the Board of Agriculture Assembly of the Association of Public and Land-Grant Universities (APLU). He has recently completed his term as the Chair of the Experiment Station Section of APLU. He received an MS in applied entomology from Imperial College, London and a PhD in entomology from the University of London.

Rebecca Larson

Rebecca Larson is an Associate Professor and Extension Specialist in the Nelson Institute for Environmental Studies at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. She completed her B.S., M.S., and Ph.D. in Biosystems and Agricultural Engineering at Michigan State University. The main component of her work focuses on increasing the sustainability of food waste and livestock manure systems to reduce environmental impact while maintaining profitability.

Wendy Powers

Wendy Powers is the Associate Vice President of Agriculture and Natural Resources at the University of California. As the Associate Vice President, Dr. Powers oversees county-based Cooperative Extension, 12 statewide programs and institutes, and 9 Research and Extension Centers for the University of California system. She spends much of her time building partnerships with partners internal and external to the University of California system. She serves as the Associate Director of Cooperative Extension and the Associate Director of the Agriculture Experiment Station since June 2016. Dr. Powers started her career as an Assistant Professor/Extension Specialist in the Animal Science Department at Iowa State University. After 10 years, Dr. Powers moved to Michigan State University (MSU) for another 10 years as a Professor/Extension Specialist and Director of Environmental Stewardship for Animal Agriculture at the College of Agriculture, Animal Science and Biosystems & Agriculture Engineering. During this time, she spent 4 years as the first Director of the MSU Extension Agriculture and Agribusiness Institute. Dr. Powers earned a PhD in animal science and an MS in dairy science from the University of Florida.

Emily Proctor

Emily Proctor, MSW, BASW, earned her degrees from Michigan State University - School of Social Work. She is a citizen of the Little Traverse Bay Bands of Odawa Indians (LTBB) Harbor Springs, Michigan, and serves as a Tribal Extension Educator, Community, Food & Environment Institute for Michigan Tribal Nations, Tribal Communities, schools, community partners and various level government with her home office located in LTBB's homelands, Emmet County, Michigan State University Extension. As the Tribal Extension Educator her projects include the development, delivery, and evaluation of educational programs in the areas of Tribal Governance, Diversity, facilitation and youth leadership. She also is the Project Manager for the Michigan Inter-Tribal Land Grant System (MILES). The MILES is the next step in building the foundation for a seamless, integrated, and intentional Land Grant System in Michigan serving all Michigan Tribal Nations Tribal Colleges, and communities. She currently sits on Tribal Council for LTBB. She has also worked as a Child Protective Services Worker and as an associate Child Welfare Commissioner. She was elected three times as LTBB's Speaker of the Annual Community Meeting. She enjoys making quilts as a way to contribute to her community.

Alton Thompson

Alton Thompson is the Executive Director for the Association of 1890 Research Directors (ARD). As ARD's executive director, he provides leadership and coordination in representing the Association in developing multistate and national priorities and implementing a regional response for the 1890 system. In addition, Thompson promotes, articulates and advocates the priorities of the 1890 region's research agenda within the framework of the US Department of Agriculture National Institute for Agriculture (NIFA), other federal agencies and the Association of Public and Land-grant Universities (APLU). Thompson serves in an executive capacity on

several committees and working groups focusing on legislative issues, federal, state and private appropriation of funds for 1890 multistate research and the long-term direction of established and developing 1890 universities initiatives.

Prior to joining ARD in August 2016, Thompson served as provost and executive vice president for Academic Affairs at Delaware State University (DSU). As DSU's chief academic officer, he provided leadership to all operations related to academic planning and budgeting; program evaluation, assessment and accreditation; educational policies and procedures; professional development; promotion and tenure of faculties; and strategic planning. His collaborative, enthusiastic and authentic style of leadership elevated all aspects of the University related to teaching, learning, scholarship, research and outreach.

Prior to joining DSU in July 2010, Thompson was a tenured professor and dean and executive director for Agricultural Programs in the School of Agriculture and Environmental Sciences at North Carolina A&T State University for eight years and then served as interim provost and vice chancellor for Academic Affairs for two years.

Thompson earned his bachelor's degree at North Carolina Central University, his master's and doctorate degrees from The Ohio State University.

Thompson was inducted into the NIFA Hall of Fame in 2008. He has also served in leadership roles on the Board of Agriculture Assembly for the Association of Public and State Universities, the 1890 Council of Deans of Agriculture, the Ford Foundation's Rural Economic Policy Program, Census of Agriculture Advisory Panel of the National Council on Food, Agricultural and Resource Economics and the Southern Governors' Southern Growth Policies Board. He currently serves on the board of directors of Carolina Farm Credit, Food Systems Leadership Institute, Foundation for Food & Agriculture Research, North Carolina Foundation for Soil and Water Conservation and the Socially Disadvantaged Farmers and Ranchers Policy Research Center.

Jeanine Parker Woods

Janine Parker Woods is the Associate Administrator for Virginia Cooperative Extension programming, where she provides oversight to Extension specialists at Virginia State University (VSU) and serves as a liaison between Cooperative Extension at VSU and Virginia Tech. Dr. Woods previously served as interim program leader for the Agriculture and Natural Resources Unit with Cooperative Extension at North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University (NC A&T SU), and developed and led regional, statewide small farm production workshops. She also served as co-chair for the North Carolina Cooperative Extension Local Foods Program Team's Economic Impacts Work Group. Dr. Woods earned a PhD in agriculture and communications from the University of Florida. She received an MA degree in agriculture economics and a BS in business management and economics from NC A&T. Woods also served in the Peace Corps for a little over two years, and worked in Guatemala as a sustainable agriculture marketing volunteer, where she assisted coffee growers in improving their production, operations and market accesses.

Steve Yanni

Steve Yanni is the Land Grant Director for Bay Mills Community College (BMCC), a Tribally controlled college located in Upper Michigan along the shores of Lake Superior. He has been working with the Bay Mills Indian Community in various capacities for 23 years. Prior to working with Bay Mills, he was a faculty member for 18 years at Lake Superior State University and worked for Michigan State University as a County Extension Director. In his current position he oversees BMCC's efforts as a 1994 Land Grant Institution. Current areas of focus include: continued development of BMCC's Waishkey Bay Farm as a teaching, research, and incubator facility focusing on sustainable agriculture and food production that is consistent with traditional Anishinaabek values, development of academic programs in sustainable agriculture, community development and health promotion efforts, overseeing BMCC's Mukwa Health and Fitness Education Center, and assisting with the evolution of the Michigan Inter-Tribal Land Grant Extension System (MILES). Steve also serves as BMCC's liaison with the Higher Learning Commission, coordinates research efforts by and with BMCC, and represents 1994 institutions on APLU's Policy Board of Directors. Steve earned his PhD from Michigan State University.