



Dr. David Taylor, PhD

"It's important to provide direction with compassion and concern. At times I've found it difficult to allow those trainees to select paths of experimentation or career choices that I may not have envisioned for them without attempting to intervene. My experience has suggested, however, that it is important to be supportive of these choices and always be willing to provide additional direction when it is needed. I believe that the influence of my role models has made me an effective and compassionate listener that allows students the support and freedom of expression they require to be successful."

~ Dr. David Taylor

division of research & graduate studies

Mentoring with Compassion

Dr. David A. Taylor is Professor and Chair in the Department of Pharmacology and Toxicology, East Carolina University, Brody School of Medicine. He obtained his PhD in Pharmacology from West Virginia University and has been a member of the ECU faculty since 2001. Dr. Taylor has received five awards for excellence in teaching at ECU and has served as advisor or co-advisor to 10 graduate students and 11 postdoctoral fellows and research associates from 1983 to present. Students mentored by Dr. Taylor have become highly successful externally funded faculty members, some as MD/PhD's, department chairs; and researchers at prestigious hospitals, and pharmaceutical companies. He has published over 90 peer reviewed journal articles in addition to numerous reviews, book chapters and abstracts. He is a member of numerous societies and associations and has served in an editorial capacity on several journals.

Dr. Taylor's mentoring philosophy was influenced by two major factors. During his graduate and postdoctoral training, he was guided by advisors who were outstanding role models as scientists, teachers and leaders in the discipline who reinforced the need to be patient and available while providing strong goal-oriented direction. His experiences as a parent and grandparent have also had a great influence on his mentoring philosophy, leading to life-long relationships.

Letters of recommendation from colleagues and former students note that Dr. Taylor has a keen sense of when to be encouraging and when to be critical while always remaining enthusiastic about students and their projects. He emphasizes the importance of developing interpersonal skills, and despite his busy schedule, maintains an 'open door' policy and meets regularly with student in the lab.



Dr. Melani Duffrin
PhD, RD, LDN

“Everyone who has had special guiding people in their lives knows how important that mentorship was to their professional development. Being a small part of the road that graduate students will travel is an honor. What I hope my graduate students will take with them on life’s journey is the importance of mentoring others.”

~ Dr. Melani Duffrin

An Appetite For Mentoring

Dr. Melani Duffrin, ECU Distinguished Graduate Faculty Mentor Award recipient, Master’s Category, is a Professor in the Department of Nutrition Science, East Carolina University, College of Human Ecology. She obtained her PhD in Curriculum & Instruction with a cognate in Food & Nutrition Science from Ohio University. Prior to ECU, Dr. Duffrin was a faculty member at Ohio University and has been a member of the ECU faculty since 2005. Dr. Duffrin has received awards for excellence in teaching at ECU and at the state level, and she has received awards for excellence in service. She has been awarded over \$2.9 million in grants as principal investigator, and has published numerous scholarly works, curricular materials, software, presentations and posters. In her mentoring activities, Dr. Duffrin seeks to build student confidence, professionalism, and self-esteem through engagement in project-based learning.

Dr. Duffrin has mentored or supervised research projects of 16 graduate students at ECU. Her students have been coauthors on seven peer-reviewed publications and on numerous posters and presentations. Students mentored by Dr. Duffrin participate in guest teaching activities and are highly engaged in community service and outreach activities. Three of her graduate students have gone on to pursue PhD degrees at other universities, two hold tenure track faculty positions, one has completed medical school, and six currently practice in clinical or community nutrition settings. Students mentored by Dr. Duffrin have received regional and national recognition through awards, scholarships, featured peer-reviewed papers, and service on national councils.

Letters of recommendation from colleagues and former students note that Dr. Duffrin has changed the lives of many students through her passion for education and by taking an active role in developing leadership, professional skills and dedication to the profession. She credits the NIH Science Education Partnership Award for making it possible for her to fund and professionally develop so many students.