

Christopher T. Smith, Ph.D.

[LinkedIn](#) [Website](#) [Blog](#)

Leader in Graduate & Postdoc Career & Professional Development, Supporter of Research Workforce

A neuroscientist by training, I now work to unlock human potential by assisting Ph.D.-trained researchers in their career transitions and advocating for more holistic career and professional development in higher education.

Education

2014 Doctor of Philosophy, Neurobiology
University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

2008 Bachelor of Science, Neuroscience
magna cum laude, Furman University, Greenville, SC

PROFESSIONAL & WORK EXPERIENCE

Postdoctoral Affairs Program Administrator, Office of the Vice President for Research & Innovation

Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, VA, **January 2022 – present**

In this newly-created role, I will lead the formation of an Office of Postdoctoral Affairs at Virginia Tech. We will seek to build community and career and professional development programming to elevate the postdoctoral experience and will work to increase recognition of Virginia Tech as a destination for postdoctoral training.

Postdoctoral Affairs Program Manager, Office of Postdoctoral Affairs (OPA), The Graduate School

North Carolina State University, Raleigh, NC, **January 2019 – January 2022**

Assisted North Carolina State University's 400+ postdoctoral scholars and house officers (DVM interns & residents) with issues in their current training roles at the University as well as in their career and professional development.

The role was primarily administrative: reviewing postdoc job descriptions, approving hires, overseeing postdoc orientation, liaising with faculty and human resources personnel to support postdoc recruitment, and managing policies & procedures.

Relevant Accomplishments:

CAREER & PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMING

Co-taught two sections of writing for journal article publication ([trainee reviews](#)); developed a new career exploration series, Career PACKways ([trainee reviews Fall 2020](#); [Spring 2021](#)), for graduate students and postdocs. Delivered workshops on [navigating the academic job market](#), [career exploration](#), & [informational interviewing/networking](#). Organized & ran three [Postdoc Academy](#) Learning Communities to help support new postdocs at NC State and across the country (2 virtual communities in 2020).

Partnered with: 1) Office for Institutional Equity and Diversity to organize a webinar focused on [Factors that Affect Career Choice and Diversity in Science](#). 2) College of Engineering on [Engineering Your Post-Postdoc Career event](#); 30% of College's postdocs attended.

Organized [Ph.D. professionals](#) and [postdoc alumni](#) career panels.

COMMUNITY BUILDING & CONNECTION

Oversight of [NC State Postdoctoral Association](#), creation of [postdoc Slack Group](#), launched [postdocs past & present LinkedIn group](#) (450+ members), publish bi-monthly [OPA newsletter](#), organize annual [postdoctoral research symposium](#) (including a [virtual event in 2021](#)), administer postdoc [professional development](#) & [travel](#) awards.

Maintain postdoc alumni database with 1,500+ records & leverage it as part of an [informational interviewing program](#) launched in January 2021 to assist graduate students & postdocs in their career exploration process.

DATA COLLECTION & REPORTING

Developed postdoc [entry](#), [exit](#), & climate surveys (for [19-20](#) & [20-21](#) academic years) to better connect NC State postdocs with professional development opportunities, document the postdoc experience to effect change, & measure [career outcomes](#).

Published OPA [2019](#) & [2020](#) Year in Review documents to highlight accomplishments & metrics.

COMMUNICATION INITIATIVES

Founder, [writer](#), & manager of [ImPACKful Blog](#) focused on highlighting [current](#) & [past](#) NC State graduate students & postdocs; sharing [tips](#) & [resources](#) to assist trainees in their career & professional development; and featuring [informational interview write-ups](#) by current trainees. I also [write for the Carpe Careers blog](#) on Inside Higher Ed's website.

Since its inception in August 2019, [ImPACKful](#) content has received 41,000+ unique page views ([see content repository](#)).

Utilized [NC State Postdoc Climate Survey](#) data to develop a [postdoc supervisor letter](#) sent to new postdocs & their supervisors that outlines the importance of communication, mentoring, & career development in maximizing the postdoc experience.

Postdoctoral Fellow, Department of Psychology

Vanderbilt University, Nashville, TN, August 2014 - January 2019

Graduate Research Assistant, Neurobiology Curriculum

University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, August 2008 - May 2014

SERVICE IN ADVANCING GRADUATE STUDENT & POSTDOC PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

[National Postdoctoral Association \(NPA\)](#)

Board of Directors, January 2020 - present

Liaise with a variety of stakeholders (postdocs, administrators, & industry) to improve the postdoctoral experience across the United States. Work with *The POSTDOcket* leadership to share stories & resources with our membership, including authoring pieces on [framing postdoc research experience for industry jobs](#), profiling [initiatives that expand training opportunities](#) (see [also](#)), highlighting [NPA resources](#), and diverse career paths ([faculty at undergraduate-serving institutions](#), [postdoc affairs](#)).

NPA Strategic Planning Chair 2021

As Chair of the NPA's Strategic Planning Committee in 2021, I worked to synthesize and organize feedback from NPA membership (postdocs and administrators) and stakeholders with key pillars and strategies as outlined by the NPA Board of Directors to draft, along with the NPA Executive Director and staff, the [2021-2024 Strategic Plan](#) for the organization. My role will now shift to working with NPA Staff and Leadership to ensure that processes to implement, track, and report on Strategic Plan progress are in place for the organization.

[Graduate Career Consortium \(GCC\)](#)

Communications Chair, August 2020 - present

In this role, I seek to improve internal communications within a fast-growing nonprofit organization as well as increase its brand and visibility to potential new members and external stakeholders.

Since beginning in the role: [GCC LinkedIn](#) followers have increased by 280%+ while total Twitter followers across our three handles, [@Grad_Careers](#), [@imaginephd](#), [@CarpeCareers](#), passed 8,200 in March 2022 (a 25%+ increase from August 2020). Worked with GCC President to implement a new quarterly GCC Committee & Regional Leadership meeting with the goal of increasing internal communication and collaboration within the organization's 12 committees. Developed a report template to allow committees to share key updates with the GCC's 500+ members as part of a [quarterly newsletter](#).

Benchmarking Committee, 2019 - present

The GCC's benchmarking surveys are a critical data product from the organization. They seek to collect important metrics from our members around how graduate-level career professionals and their offices are supported including staff size, staff salaries, office budgets, and challenges faced by professionals working in this space.

I have assisted with developing, editing, and reporting on the 2020 Institutional & 2021 Individual Member surveys.

Faculty Job Market Research Group, 2019 - present

Interdisciplinary and diverse group of postdocs, faculty, and administrators seeking to understand predictors of faculty job market success. [Publication of 2018-2019 faculty job market data](#).

Currently analyzing data for the 2019-2020 faculty job market cycle and planning data collection for the 2020-2021 cycle.

For scholarly publications, see [NCBI Bibliography](#)

A collection of my other writings can be found on my [personal website](#), [LinkedIn](#), [PassioInventa](#), & [LifeApps](#).