The Future of Education in Plant Pathology and Related Disciplines

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Background

• Assistant Professor of Agriculture and Biology
  – Coordinator of Ag Program
  – Appointment

• Enrollment
Getting From Point A to Point B…
Ensuring Continuity in the Field…

• Strategies to improve recruitment
• “Future-proof” graduate curricula
• Standard curricula?
• Redefine the modern plant pathologist?
Graduate Experience

- University of Florida
- Experiential learning
An Assortment of Commodities
Expect the Unexpected…

• “Research invariably produces unanticipated outcomes”
  – Roundup treated soybeans and ASR
    • SAR or other mechanism?
Think Outside of the Box…

- Dr. Jeff Jones
  *Xanthomonas* trial in tomatoes
    - pH
Common Critiques of Graduates in the Sciences

• **Critique #1:** Graduates are not “worldly” enough
• **Symptoms:** Too narrow of a pathosystem focus, disconnect between their work and the real-world

• **Preventative Therapies:**
  – Compulsory semester abroad
  – Compulsory extensionist rotation
    • Expose students to a diversity of:
      – Pathosystems
      – Stakeholders
      – Worldviews
  – Field plant pathology course
Common Critiques of Graduates in the Sciences

• **Critique #2**: Graduates are “dittoheads” who are perhaps too insular

• **Symptoms**: Self-explanatory

• **Preventative Therapy**: A semester abroad to work on “improvisational” skills
Common Critiques of Graduates in the Sciences

• **Critique #3**: An overreliance on genomics

• **Symptom**: The decline of classical microscopy in disease diagnosis, and the outright elimination of disease diagnosis courses

• **Preventative Therapy**: Reinstate and emphasize classical microscopy (dedicated modular course?) and disease diagnosis as two in a suite of diagnostic tools in a standardized curriculum
Common Critiques of Graduates in the Sciences

• **Critique #4**: Graduates are not knowledgeable about the machinations of government

• **Solution**: Introduce elements of policy to a standardized curriculum
Questions