J. Steven de Belle, Ph.D.
Keynote Speaker – Bio
Northern Rocky Mountain Educational Research Association 2020
Conference
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Conference Theme: The Science of Learning

The brain is a physiological marvel of nature, and the canvas on which we experience our individual lives. Understanding how it wires, works and changes has been the focus of Dr. J. Steven de Belle's research, a basis for effective educational practice, and an engine of beneficial, lucrative and exhilarating enterprise. With a focus on learning and memory, his research programs in academia and industry have centered on characterizing the genetic, physiological, structural and cognitive properties of brains that enable human and non-human animals to modify their behavior and adapt in response to changing environments throughout their lives.

Dr. de Belle has contributed to and promoted the development of innovative research, didactic teaching and mentoring, organizational and programmatic advancement, and effective communication of science and technology to the public. He is a proponent of the Science of Learning pedagogy, integrating learning and research across disciplines, exploiting discovery in teaching and mentoring, and translating the fruits of training and discovery into technologies, services and a contemporary professional work force that are able to address significant societal needs.

Students are the engines of creative discovery and the heart of a laboratory or research institution. As a researcher, STEM educator and mentor of students and trainees from all walks of life, he is convinced that a diversity of minds, experiences, skills and perspectives breeds creativity, novelty and limitless capacity for problem solving, invention and leadership. Educational programs built with a comprehensive focus on research and effective broader impacts such as diversity and inclusivity are more innovative, robust and likely to translate and transform society in the 21st century.

Dr. de Belle's professional experiences include examining the mechanistic underpinnings of brain plasticity, learning and memory as a Research Scientist at the Max-Planck-Institute for Biological Cybernetics; tenured faculty service in the College of Sciences at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas; direction of sponsored research programs in Neural and Behavioral Sciences and Technical Director of the Science of Learning Centers Program at the National Science Foundation; and direction of drug target discovery programs at Dart NeuroScience LLC, a mid-sized private pharmaceutical company engineering small molecule therapies for cognitive enhancement. Currently he teaches in the Behavioral Neuroscience Program at the University of San Diego, and is Co-Founder and Managing Principal at mnemOdyssey LLC, a technology company providing memory and genomic assessment and training tools for personal, educational and workforce performance improvement, and serves as Chief Science Officer at Acrovirt LLC, a biotechnology company integrating human and non-human neural, physiological and behavioral responses to novel stimuli for biomedical and commercial applications. Dr. de Belle was awarded a Ph.D. in Genetics from York University (Toronto, 1991) for describing the genetic and heritable foundations of naturally occurring behaviors.

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