



THE CULTIVATED CONNECTION



April 2025 | Virginia Tech CALS

Graduate Student Spotlight

Highlighting our graduate students that have assisted in the facilitation and coordination of the Engaging Secondary Teachers in CALS Research for Agricultural Literacy. Our graduate students are available to visit with your students via Zoom and help answer any questions about implementing materials in your classroom.



Vinicius Alves Cruz

PhD Student



Tell us about yourself and your background:

Hey folks, I'm Vinicius (Vini), I'm an animal scientist from Brazil. During my undergrad, I was granted a scholarship from Capes-Brazil to study abroad in the United States, learning about equine nutrition and management at North Dakota State University and beef cattle nutrition and management at the University of California, Davis. Before coming to Virginia Tech, I got a masters degree in Brazil and started my PhD program at Montana State university. As part of my PhD research, I have been working with maternal nutrition in beef cattle and how it can impact the offspring performance.

Why did you choose to work with the Professional Development in Agricultural Literacy (PDAL) Program?:

The PDAL and GTS program are both great assets here at VT for those who are seeking to enhance their skills in leadership, teaching, public speech, organization and so on. At the previous universities that I have attended there was nothing close to what the PDAL program does and because of that, I will try to get the best of it for my professional development as a future teacher in Ag.

What is one interesting thing about you that people should know?:

I am a very enthusiastic Magic the gathering player!

CALS CURRENTS

What's happening in VT CALS?



Meet Tiffany Wood Mahler!

Tiffany Wood Mahler is the K-12 Outreach and Engagement Coordinator at the Virginia Seafood Research and Extension Center in Hampton, VA. In this role, Tiffany leads the development of programs and relationships with school officials and teachers with the goal of expanding and strengthening VSAREC's partnerships. Tiffany has provided educational experiences, field trips, and presentations about AREC research and Extension programs to over 2,000 students spanning 10 different cities within Southeast Virginia!

Tiffany's favorite part of working at the seafood AREC is increasing students awareness of aquaculture at a young age and spotlighting exciting careers like live feed specialist!

We are so excited to work with Tiffany to plan this year's Professional Development for Agricultural Literacy Summer Program!

Interested in planning an aquaculture demonstration or field trip to the Seafood AREC?

Tiffany is available to connect with teachers to plan exciting educational experiences for students of all ages! Contact her at twood13@vt.edu.

Ready, Set, Grow!



Here is a free resource that can be utilized in your classroom:

Women in Agriculture: An International Development Perspective

ANNOUNCEMENTS



We still have **5** spots left for the Professional Development for Agricultural Literacy Summer program for secondary teachers this summer!

June 23-27 at The Virginia Seafood Agricultural Research and Extension Center in **Hampton, Virginia!**

Apply now or share with a friend:

[2025 PDAL Application](#)

Contact Us!

We'd love to hear from you! If you have questions about our programs or opportunities to engage with CALS please reach out to **Dr. Donna Westfall-Rudd** at mooredm@vt.edu or **Nia McLean** at mnia@vt.edu