

## **Middle Tennessee Research Administration and Innovation Network (M-TRAIN)**

**May 28<sup>th</sup>, 2025**



**VANDERBILT  
UNIVERSITY**

# M-TRAIN: Human Research Protections and Institutional Review Boards

## LOCATION & TIMES

Date and Time	Wednesday, May 28 <sup>th</sup> , 2025, 8:30 am – 2:00 pm
Event Address	<b>Vanderbilt University</b> Memorial Room, Alumni Hall 2205 West End Avenue, Nashville TN 37240
Parking Address	<b>Terrace Place Garage</b> 2010 Terrace Place, Nashville TN 37203

## AGENDA

TIME	ACTIVITY
8:30 am – 9:00 am	Check in, breakfast, networking
9:00 am – 9:15 am	Introduction to M-TRAIN <b>Phil Ko</b> , Associate Director for Research Development, Vanderbilt University
9:15 am – 10:00 am	Adaptable Human Research Protections Programs <b>Liane Moneta-Koehler</b> , Assistant Provost for Research Integrity and Compliance, Vanderbilt University
10:00 am – 10:15 am	Break
10:15 am – 11:00 am	Expert Panel Question and Answer Session <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Lorry Liotta-Kleinfeld</b>: Professor of Occupational Therapy, Interim Chair of IRB, Belmont University</li> <li>• <b>Chad Rezsnyak</b>: Associate Professor of Chemistry, Chair of IRB, Tennessee Tech University</li> <li>• <b>Molly Shiflet</b>: Operations Manager, Human Research Protections Program, Vanderbilt University Medical Center</li> <li>• <b>Shannon Simmons</b>: Learning and Development Manager, Human Research Protections Program, Vanderbilt University Medical Center</li> </ul>
11:00 am – 12:00 pm	Small Group Breakout Session
12:00 pm – 1:00 pm	Lunch
1:00 pm – 2:00 pm	Informal Networking

# BREAKOUT SESSION TOOL

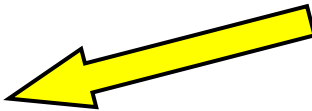
M-TRAIN Workshop, Vanderbilt University

May 28, 2025



1. Scan the QR code to the left to open the digital whiteboard on your smart phone or computer. Or, go to:

<https://tinyurl.com/mtrainirb>



2. Select and "duplicate" a sticky note and start typing!

A screenshot of the digital whiteboard interface. On the left, there is a toolbar with icons for erasing, deleting, and adding sticky notes. Below the toolbar is a QR code and the URL <https://tinyurl.com/mtrainirb>. The main area of the whiteboard is titled "Human Research Protections & IRB" and is divided into three columns with headings: "What is the problem?", "How do we know this is a problem?", and "How will we know when we've solved this problem?". A pink sticky note with the text "These are my thoughts on the issue..." is placed under the first heading. A yellow arrow points from the toolbar to the sticky note.

3. Move the sticky note under the appropriate heading.

## ADVISORY BOARD

---



**Phyllis Danner (Tennessee State University):** Phyllis is Executive Director of Research and Sponsored Programs at TSU, providing daily leadership, supervision, and administration of the division. She is responsible for pre-award and non-financial post-award administration for proposals and awards of federal, state, private, foundation, and local agencies. She is the project manager of all external information systems, e.g., Research.gov, Grants.gov, NIH Commons, etc. She is also responsible for assisting in garnering over \$100 million in funding awards during the 2023 fiscal year, conducts university-wide training and leadership concerning compliance and budget development, and is an adjunct professor at TSU.



**Janice Lovell (Trevecca Nazarene University):** Janice Lovell is Director of Grants and Foundation Relations at Trevecca Nazarene University. Janice is currently in the tenth year of leadership at Trevecca Nazarene University, her alma mater. She spent over 25 years in the Center of Excellence for Learning Sciences at TSU working with federally funded higher education degree pathways for early childhood teachers. Janice hosts Grants Academy sessions for AmeriCorps VISTA members from the campus and conducts Responsible Conduct in Research training. She is a member and frequent mentor for the Grant Professional Association of middle Tennessee.



**Beverly McDonalds-Robinson (Fisk University):** Beverly McDonalds-Robinson is the Director of Sponsored Research and the Director of Title III at Fisk University.



**Aramandla Ramesh (Meharry Medical College):** Aramandla Ramesh is a Professor in the Department of Biochemistry, Cancer Biology, Neuroscience & Pharmacology at Meharry Medical College. He also serves as the Associate Vice-President for Research and Innovation at Meharry. He is an environmental toxicologist by training. His research is funded by NIH, DOE, NSF, EPA, and ACS. Aramandla's research interests are in the areas of environmental health and toxicology, public health exposome, and chemical carcinogenesis.



**Robyn Saakian (Lipscomb University):** Robyn Saakian is the director of the Office of Research and Grants at Lipscomb University. She has led Lipscomb to attain public and private grants for academics and research for the past twelve years. In her role in the Office of Research and Grants, Saakian manages institutional oversight of the entire life of the grant cycle, from proposal development to grant management and compliance. Prior to joining Lipscomb, Saakian spent more than a dozen years in Washington, D.C., overseeing international development-related grant programs for two national nonprofit organizations.



**Joanne Spitz (Vanderbilt University):** Joanne is the Executive Director of the Research Development and Support (RDS) team within Vanderbilt's Office of the Vice Provost for Research and Innovation. Prior to this role, she served as the Senior Director of Grant Initiatives, Corporate and Foundation Relations at Baylor University, resulting in a significant increase in Foundation and other private support for faculty researchers. Joanne also spent over 30 years in research development and pre- and post-award administration at Washington University in St. Louis in multiple departments and schools, including Neuroscience, Biology, and the Olin Business School. While at Olin, she worked for 11 years as the administrator of an interdisciplinary research network sponsored by The MacArthur Foundation. She was also instrumental in the establishment of a new grants program for the Olin School and served as its first Grant Development Manager.



**Michelle Willard (Middle Tennessee State University):** Grant hunter. Master's candidate. Former reporter. Recovering archaeologist. General nerd.



**Ellen Zinkiewicz (Belmont University):** Ellen is the Director of Belmont University's inaugural Office of Sponsored Programs and responsible for scaling administration, compliance, and customer support for the University-wide push to increase grant funding. Prior to coming to Belmont, she directed Nashville's youth employment programs including creating and leading the city's first full scale, city-funded youth employment initiative, Opportunity NOW. Ellen is a social worker with an MSSW from University of Tennessee's College of Social Work. She has an undergraduate degree from University of Evansville and was a Fulbright in Debrecen, Hungary. In her spare time, she likes to garden.



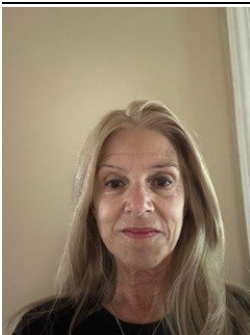
## SPEAKERS & PANELISTS



**Liane Moneta-Koehler (Vanderbilt University):** As Assistant Provost for Research Integrity and Compliance at Vanderbilt, Liane Moneta-Koehler oversees the Research Integrity and Compliance Program, which includes human subjects research, research security, and export compliance. She collaborates with various departments to enhance Vanderbilt's research integrity and accountability, helps faculty navigate policies, and supports research growth in a manner that mitigates risk. Previously a director in the Office of the Vice Provost and a postdoctoral fellow, Moneta-Koehler holds a Ph.D. in Psychology and Human Development and has expertise in math cognition and doctoral student success.



**Chad Rezsnyak (Tennessee Technological University):** Chad is Associate Professor and Associate Chair of Chemistry at Tennessee Technological University. Chad has been a member of the Tennessee Tech IRB since 2017 and has been its Chairperson since Summer 2023.



**Lorry Liotta-Kleinfeld (Belmont University):** Dr. Lorry Liotta-Kleinfeld is a Professor in the School of Occupational Therapy at Belmont University and Interim Chair of the Institutional Review Board. She has over 30 years of clinical experience, specializing in school-based and outpatient pediatric services. Her teaching areas include research, pediatrics, and neuroscience. She has published on topics such as clinical reasoning, social participation in children, neuroscience, and interprofessional education. Her research focuses on applying neuroscience to support children's participation and advancing interprofessional collaboration. Since 1999, she has served as an external consultant for the HRSA-funded Vanderbilt LEND program.



**Molly Shiflet (Vanderbilt University Medical Center):** Molly Shiflet is an Operations Manager with the Human Research Protections Program at VUMC. She is responsible for overseeing many of the day-to-day operations of the HRPP, and works closely with colleagues both within the department and externally to implement best practices and streamline IRB review processes. She serves as a mentor and regulatory expert for HRPP staff to ensure research is reviewed in a manner that is compliant with current federal regulations and institutional policies.



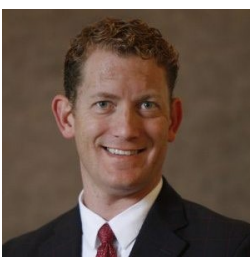
**Shannon Simmons (Vanderbilt University Medical Center):** Shannon Simmons is the Learning and Development Manager for the Human Research Protections Program (HRPP) at Vanderbilt University Medical Center (VUMC). With over 20 years of experience at VUMC HRPP, she specializes in onboarding and training new department hires. Shannon also leads intradepartmental training and provides continuing education for both HRPP staff and the wider VUMC research community. As a regulatory expert, she ensures that research is conducted in accordance with current federal regulations and institutional policies.

## ATTENDEES

---



**Chad Brooks (Austin Peay State University):** Chad Brooks is the Vice Provost of Research at Austin Peay State University. He is responsible for coordinating all of the administrative duties for Research, Grants and Sponsored Programs, International Education, the Center for Workforce Development, and the College of Graduate Studies. He is also responsible for establishing the policies and procedures that govern these areas. Chad chairs the Graduate and Research Council, facilitates the Institutional Review Board, and coordinates Graduate Faculty approvals and the Graduate Student Appeals Process. Chad also represents APSU's College of Graduate Studies at THEC and several other professional organizations. He is also an active faculty member on campus. He is passionate about foster care and working in the community.



**Brandon Di Paolo Harrison (Austin Peay State University):** Dr. Di Paolo Harrison worked in healthcare accounting as a consultant and CFO for hospitals and health systems for over 15 years. Upon completing his doctorate in accounting and statistics at Creighton University, he joined the accounting faculty at Austin Peay State University. He has served on the IRB committee for 6 years and as chair for the past year.



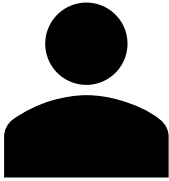
**Sharana Jones (Austin Peay State University):** Sharana Jones is the Grants Specialist for Austin Peay State University in the College of STEM. She has worked in the Research Administration field for over 20 years in the Healthcare and Higher Education industry, working with federal, foundation and private grants supporting underserved, youth, and community-based initiatives. She received her Bachelor's degree from Ferris State University and is working on her Master's in Community Leadership at APSU and her Certified Research Administrator certification. She is an active member of the APSU Black Faculty and Staff Association and the National Council of University Research Administrators.



**Kelly Pitts (Austin Peay State University):** Kelly Pitts is the current Assistant Director of Grants at Austin Peay State University. She has a Master's in Corporate Communications and has been working in Grants Administration since 2017. She is also an adjunct professor in the Department of Communication and has been at Austin Peay State University since 2012. She has a wealth of knowledge of the campus and the community. She is an active member of NCURA, board member of the university Staff Senate Committee, and volunteers as a board member with Bella's Closet, a local non-profit in Clarksville, as their grant manager.



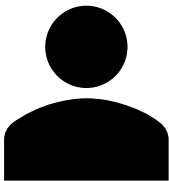
**Brenda Gill (Belmont University):** Brenda Gill is the Grants Administrator at the Office of Sponsored Programs at Belmont University. She holds a BSN from D'Youville College, an MS in Exercise and Nutrition Science from Lipscomb University and is currently pursuing a Doctor of Public Health (DrPH) at Walden University, which she is expected to complete in 2025. Brenda's extensive experience in leadership includes operational, strategic, and clinical roles at Allstate Insurance and Onlife Health respectively. In her current role, Brenda oversees pre-award activities, grant research, and submission processes to position faculty for successful grant funding.



**Melissa Guinn (Middle Tennessee State University):** Melissa is a research compliance assistant at Middle Tennessee State University.



**Nolan Hatley (Middle Tennessee State University):** A. "Nolan" Hatley is the Research Compliance Officer at Middle Tennessee State University. His academic and professional training is in philosophy, in which he earned his Ph.D. at the University of Tennessee in 2016. He has enjoyed transferring his analytical skills from this background to research compliance, especially with IRB protocol reviews.



**Shen Maestre (Middle Tennessee State University):** Shen is a Research Compliance Assistant and Student Worker at Middle Tennessee State University.



**Keith Palmer (Middle Tennessee State University):** Keith Palmer is an award management specialist at Middle Tennessee State University. His role primarily focuses on the pre-award aspect of grants. Keith holds a Bachelor's degree in Communication from MTSU. Keith's current position in the Office of Research is his second time working at MTSU. He previously held Advancement and Development positions at MTSU, Tennessee Tech University and The University of Tennessee Chattanooga. His passion is listening to all types of music, but primarily jazz and classic R&B. One of his favorite past jobs was being an announcer for several Nashville area radio stations.





**Jordan Weinstein (Nashville State Community College):** Jordan Weinstein is the Director of Grants Development at Nashville State Community College Foundation, where she leads the college's grants initiatives. With over a decade of experience in the nonprofit world, Jordan brings a unique blend of hands-on dedication and strategic expertise to her work. Known for rolling up her sleeves and diving into every project, they've helped secure millions in funding for educational institutions and nonprofits alike. Prior to joining Nashville State, Jordan held roles such as Grant Analyst for TNECD, National Development Director for Youth Rising, and Grants Specialist for San Antonio ISD. Through each role, Jordan has honed a reputation for fostering collaboration, understanding community needs, and driving impactful change through grant initiatives.



**Jai Starling (Starling Strategy & Financial Consulting):** Jai Starling is the Founder & Principal Consultant of Starling Strategy & Financial Consulting. She specializes in simplifying financial and grant management operations for mission-driven organizations, with a focus on higher education, nonprofits, and public sectors. Combining expertise in finance administration with data-driven leadership strategies, Jai helps organizations build sustainable systems that drive clarity, compliance, and operational excellence.



**Amanda Ruff (Tennessee State University):** Amanda Ruff is a program manager for MVTCP, a U54 CPACHE collaboration involving Tennessee State University, Meharry Medical College, and Vanderbilt University. With over 15 years of experience, Amanda has assisted in various special genetics projects within Cores, including the BioVu initiative and ACTG, as well as contributing to the development of a universal flu vaccine as an associate scientist. Currently, she is in the process of transitioning to a career in research administration, broadening her impact in the field.



**Neal Hunt (Tennessee Technological University):** Neal Hunt has worked in sponsored programs since 1996, beginning at a small quasi-state agency focused on water supply and conservation. In his career he has worked at non-profit, for profit and state institutions. After working at Vanderbilt University Medical Center for 18 years as a Contracts Team Lead and as Department Manager, Neal joined Tennessee Technological University in 2022 as Director of Sponsored Programs.



**Ryan Edwards (Tennessee Technological University):** Coordinates contract compliance, subawards, and non-monetary agreements for Tennessee Technological University. Works as administrative staff for various research committees including IRB. Graduated from Tennessee Technological University in 2017.



**Darek Potter (Tennessee Technological University):** Dr. Potter has been the Director of the Oakley STEM Center at Tennessee Tech since 2018. He holds an M.S. in Civil Engineering from Vanderbilt University, an M.A. in both STEM Education and Exercise Science from Tennessee Tech, and a Ph.D. in Program Planning and Evaluation from Tennessee Tech. He worked as a professional engineer for over 20 years before transitioning to education full-time. Dr. Potter has served as either PI or co-PI on more than 15 grants, has taught engineering courses at both Penn State and York College, and currently teaches Research Methods courses at Tennessee Tech.



**Charmian Leong (Tennessee Technological University):** Charmian Leong is the Director of Research Integrity and Compliance at Tennessee Technological University.



**Heidi R. Ventura (Trevecca Nazarene University):** Heidi serves as Associate Dean for Academic Research and Innovation at Trevecca Nazarene University. She is a tenured professor in the School of Leadership and Interdisciplinary Studies, teaching doctoral research design and serving as a dissertation methodologist. Heidi serves as the chair of Trevecca's Institutional Review Board. She has taught courses in business, management, leadership, research, and interdisciplinary studies and has published and presented on topics of accreditation, adult learner experience, faculty engagement, accountability, authentic leadership, and other areas of leadership theory and praxis.



**John Sousa (Vanderbilt University):** John is a Grants Coordinator at Vanderbilt University.