

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

**June 24<sup>th</sup>, 2025**



## M-TRAIN: Small Business in Research (SBIR) and Small Business Technology Transfer (STTR) Grants

### LOCATION & TIMES

Date and Time	Tuesday, June 24 <sup>th</sup> , 2025, 8:30 am – 2:30 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 – 9:10 am	Introduction to M-TRAIN and review of communications tools Phil Ko, Vanderbilt University
9:10 am – 9:20 am	Introduction to Launch TN and Tennessee Technology Advancement Consortium (TTAC) Jennifer Skjellum, Launch TN
9:20 am – 10:10 am	SBIR and STTR grants: Processes and Best Practices Allyn Abadie, Launch TN
10:10 am – 10:20 am	Break
10:20 am – 11:10 am	Expert Panel on SBIR and STTR grants <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Leanne Boehm:</b> Assistant Professor, School of Nursing, Vanderbilt University</li> <li>• <b>Cam Crain:</b> Venture Acceleration Manager, Center for Technology Transfer and Commercialization, Vanderbilt University</li> <li>• <b>Joshua Gafford:</b> Chief Technology Officer, EndoTheia</li> <li>• <b>Gideon Thomas:</b> Founder and CEO, Serious Health, LLC</li> </ul> Nicole Zaleski, Vanderbilt University
11:10 am – 12:15 pm	Workshop exercise: Review project like SBIR/STTR program officer Allyn Abadie, Launch TN
12:15 pm – 1:15 pm	Lunch
1:15 pm – 2:00 pm	Group Discussions, Questions, and Next Steps
2:00 pm – 3:00 pm	Informal networking
3:00 pm – 3:30 pm	Breakdown

## ADVISORY BOARD

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**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

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**Allyn Abadie (Launch Tennessee):** Dr. Allyn Abadie serves as the Technology Advancement Coordinator at Launch Tennessee, where she supports founders pursuing SBIR/STTR. Allyn holds a B.S. in Athletic Training from Nova Southeastern University, an M.A. in Health Studies from The University of Alabama, and a Ph.D. in Nutrition Sciences at The University of Alabama at Birmingham. Her doctoral research focused on tracking concussion recovery through metabolic monitoring. With a strong foundation in clinical research and academic training, Allyn brings a unique perspective to technology commercialization. She is passionate about helping founders translate innovative research into impactful, real-world solutions.



**Jennifer Skjellum (LaunchTN):** Jennifer Skjellum is the University Advisor for LaunchTN's Tennessee Technology Advancement Consortium (TTAC), focused on providing access to technology transfer services, elevating the profile of university research, and increasing commercialization outcomes across the state of Tennessee. She also serves in a consulting role at the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga as a commercialization counselor, working with faculty and graduate students to advance research commercialization in collaboration with the UT Research Foundation. She is also co-founder and President of Runtime Computing Solutions, a software and services company that serves the defense systems and high-performance computing sectors.



**Leanne Boehm (Vanderbilt University):** Dr. Boehm is a distinguished researcher focused on improving patient and family outcomes in critical care. Her work targets the eradication of delirium, oversedation, and immobilization in ICUs, enhancing survivorship quality. She's notably contributed to reducing ICU delirium and PICS through the ABCDEF bundle, recovery clinics, and peer support. With expertise in implementation science and quality improvement, Dr. Boehm currently investigates telehealth for ICU recovery and digital tools for family engagement. She is an investigator at the CIBS Center and faculty at Vanderbilt's Center for Clinical Quality and Implementation Research.



**Cameron Crain (Vanderbilt University):** Cameron joined the CTTC in September 2022, working with the New Ventures team to assist faculty and administration in commercializing Vanderbilt's IP, with an emphasis on post-launch startup activity. Previously, he was Co-Founder, President, and COO of X Co, an independent accelerator investing in and training early-stage software companies. Before venture, he was an educator and Director of Marketing at Sage Ridge School. Cameron holds a Master's in Theatre Production from Southern Oregon University and a B.A. in English from Washington State University, along with a Venture Capital certification from Berkeley Law.





**Joshua Gafford (EndoTheia, Inc):** Joshua Gafford leads and manages all day-to-day engineering activities at EndoTheia, Inc., which is a medical device startup from Vanderbilt University that develops next-generation flexible endoscopic tools and devices. Joshua has led the submission of several NIH SBIR/STTR proposals; efforts which have resulted in five federally-funded awards and two stage matching grants, totaling \$6.7M of non-dilutive seed funding for EndoTheia to date. Joshua received his Ph.D from Harvard University, where his research focused on the development of modular robotic systems for therapeutic endoscopy. He is also a graduate of Massachusetts Institute of Technology and Stanford University.



**Gideon Thomas (Serious Healthcare):** Gideon Thomas is the CEO of Serious Healthcare, and Co-Founder and COO of Kinlike.Care. Gideon Thomas is a seasoned entrepreneur and breast cancer survivor leading innovative solutions in healthcare access through Medicaid and NIH-funded research. As cofounder of a nationally recognized SBIR awardee, she empowers underrepresented founders to navigate federal funding. Her work bridges policy, equity, and business strategy, making her a dynamic voice on SBIR/STTR impact and innovation.

## ATTENDEES



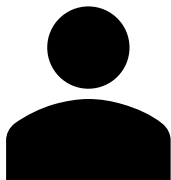
**Chad Brooks (Austin Peay State University):** Chad Brooks is the Vice Provost of Research at Austin Peay State University. He is responsible for coordinating all of the administrative duties for Research, Grants and Sponsored Programs, International Education, the Center for Workforce Development, 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.



**Dave Dessauer (Austin Peay State University):** Dave Dessauer is the Director of the Tennessee Small Business Development Center at Austin Peay State University.



**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.



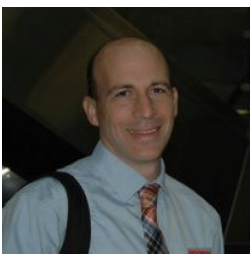
**JJ White (Austin Peay State University):** Dr. JJ White is the Academic Associate to the Dean at Austin Peay State University's College of Business.



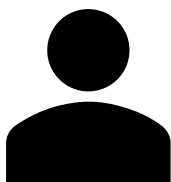
**Jamaine Davis (Belmont University):** Dr. Jamaine Davis is a structural biologist and health disparities researcher leading a federally and privately funded program on biophysical techniques, lipid transport, and health equity. His work bridges molecular biology and public health to improve outcomes in underserved populations while strengthening trust in science through inclusive and collaborative approaches. As Assistant Dean for Scholarly Productivity and Innovation at the Frist College of Medicine at Belmont, he is building the research infrastructure, mentoring faculty and students, and advancing initiatives that integrate science, education, and community engagement.



**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.



**Nick Ragsdale (Belmont University):** Dr. Nick Ragsdale is the Associate Dean of Development and Academic Initiatives in the College of Sciences and Mathematics and Professor of Biology at Belmont University. With over 25 years of experience in undergraduate science education, research, and academic leadership, he has developed STEM initiatives, research partnerships, and innovative curriculum at both the undergraduate and medical school levels. He served as a founding faculty member of Belmont's Frist College of Medicine and now focuses on advancing regional collaboration by fostering mutually beneficial relationships with local researchers, institutions, and industry to expand research infrastructure and discovery opportunities across Middle Tennessee.



**Thom Spence (Belmont University):** Thom Spence is Dean of the College of Sciences and Mathematics. He is looking to help faculty develop lines of research that support small businesses. Thom's research is in the area of developing electroanalytical sensors for environmental monitoring of heavy metal contamination.





**Joe Rolwing (Cumberland Emerging Technologies):** Joe Rowling is the Executive Director of Cumberland Emerging Technologies. Mr. Rolwing’s 38 years of experience in the healthcare industry includes former positions as Vice President and Business Manager for Genetics Associates, Inc., a \$3.2 million diagnostic medical lab, and Vice President of Corporate Affairs for Centerstone Community Mental Health Centers, Inc., where he managed care contracts, budgeting, risk management, billing and accounts receivable. Mr. Rolwing also served as Special Projects Director and Finance Director for the Helen Ross McNabb Center in Knoxville, Tennessee. His MBA is from the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill.



**Brooke Vizard (Kimbro Oil Company):** Brooke Vizard is Vice President at Kimbro Oil Company, a third-generation Tennessee-based energy and fluid services provider. She leads strategy, innovation, and new venture development, including immersive cooling solutions for data centers and edge AI infrastructure. Brooke also helps oversee her family’s commercial real estate portfolio and serves as a board member of PowerUp America, an EV infrastructure startup. She serves as President-Elect of the Tennessee Fuel & Convenience Store Association and is engaged in regional workforce development and infrastructure initiatives that support reliable, diversified energy access — including fossil fuels, alternative fuels, and emerging technologies like grid-relieving cooling systems and EV charging.



**Charles Layne (LaunchTN):** Charles Layne currently serves as the Technology Advancement Manager at LaunchTN, where he works to facilitate the commercialization of technologies across the state of TN in addition to striving to improve the TN innovation ecosystem through policy, advocacy, and development efforts. These efforts include the development of the Tennessee Technology Advancement Consortium, a pilot project to create a statewide technology transfer and commercialization support office to increase resources available to participating universities. Chuck previously worked in Nashville and Memphis on housing, transportation, and public infrastructure projects. He holds a bachelor’s degree in community development and a Master of City and Regional Planning from the University of Memphis.



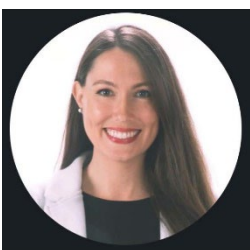
**Jeff Cohu (Lipscomb University):** Dr. Jeff Cohu is an experienced management consultant, entrepreneur, and educator. In addition to his ongoing consulting practice, he currently serves as a professor of management and executive director of the Center for Entrepreneurship and Innovation at Lipscomb University and as a graduate professor of management at the Broad College of Business at Michigan State University. Prior to entering academics, Cohu served in numerous senior corporate leadership roles in strategic, financial, and human resource management.



**Anthony Archibong (Meharry Medical College):** Anthony Archibong is an Emeritus Professor in the Department of Microbiology, Immunology and Physiology. He is an American Board of Bioanalysis-certified Andrologist. His areas of research include: 1) influence of environmental endocrine disruptors on fertility and pregnancy failure; 2) fertility restoration; 3) male contraceptive pill development. He was awarded a US patent (# US 5439884 A) titled: "Method of controlling fertilization using bombesin or its agonist" and he has 3 pending patents, titled: 1. "Okra Extract as a Substitute for Cervical Mucus"; 2. Okra-derived Antiviral Composition and Uses Thereof"; 3. "Hydroxyurea to Enhance Sperm Cells."



**Terrica Arnold (Meharry Medical College):** Dr. Terrica Arnold joined the Center for Health Policy in April 2014. Dr. Arnold leads the Center's community engagement initiatives, manages the Certificate in Health Policy Program, and collaborates with the team in grant writing and research endeavors. Under the Center, Dr. Arnold leads the Choosing How I Lead Life (CHILL) Program and Youth Achieving Success (YAS) Program. Both programs aim to reduce violence and conflicts among youth in the Nashville Community. Dr. Arnold has also led the Health Snack Tour Program and Meharry Wellness Club, to combat obesity and other health disparities. Dr. Arnold received her undergraduate degree in political science from Fisk University, a master's degree in educational administration from Tennessee State University (TSU), and her doctorate in Educational Leadership from TSU. She has dedicated over a decade to higher education in the areas of student life, civic engagement and community-based minority health disparity research and programming.



**Evelina Naish (Meharry Medical College):** Evelina graduated from the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga with a BS in Biology Pre-Professional and minors in Chemistry and Psychology. Continuing her academic pursuits, she earned an MS in Secondary Science Education from the University of Tennessee at Knoxville. She then embarked on a teaching career where she established the BioSTEM program at Franklin High School. This innovative program was aimed to immerse students in the fields of Health Science, Biomedicine, and Biotechnology through a comprehensive curriculum and experiential learning opportunities. The success of the program led to her current role as Program Manager, NSF I-Corps at Meharry Medical College.



**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.



**Luke Chandler (Motlow State Community College):** Luke is an undergraduate student seeking to advance the field of in vitro and in vivo therapeutics with deep learning algorithms targeted at predicting cellular determinants.



**Jordan Weinstein-Fleming (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.



**Josh Love (Rapid Dev):** Josh is an angel investor with an MBA in organizational leadership. Josh's expertise is in no-code/low-code apps and AI to accelerate transformation for clients. In this role, Josh manages daily duties overseeing a sales team.



**Jessica Barkley (Tennessee State University):** Jessica Barkley is a certified corporate and small business manager with over 10 years of experience. In her role as Electronic Records Manager at Tennessee State University, he helps principal investigators gain clarity, set realistic goals, and develop actionable plans to overcome spending obstacles and achieve success.



**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.





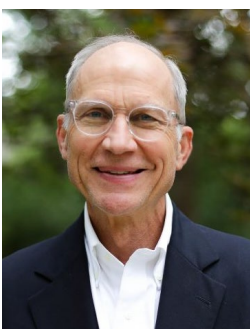
**Mark Lynam (Tennessee Technological University):** Mark is the Director of Research Development and Proposal Services at Tennessee Technological University. He has over twenty years in the field of research administration, development, and technology transfer with Tennessee Tech. Still learning.



**Michael Natrass (Tennessee Technological University):** Dr. Michael Natrass integrates precision agriculture, drone systems, and IoT-enabled sensor networks to advance Smart Farm technologies. At Tennessee Tech, he leads SkyLink Ag, a system that utilizes UAVs to relay agronomic and environmental data from remote sensors in low-connectivity regions. His research emphasizes scalable solutions for site-specific crop management, real-time soil and climate monitoring, and predictive modeling powered by AI-based analytics. By enhancing input efficiency and environmental monitoring, his approach supports sustainable decision-making across diverse farming systems-reimagining agriculture as a connected, automated ecosystem that promotes food security and environmental stewardship.



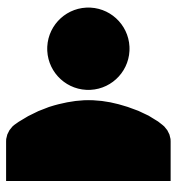
**Mohamed Shaban (Tennessee Technological University):** Mohamed Shaban is a Ph.D. candidate in Computer Science at Tennessee Technological University, Cookeville, Tennessee. He received his Bachelor of Science degree in Computer Science and his Master of Science degree in Quantum Computing from the Faculty of Science, Alexandria University, in 2015 and 2021, respectively. His research interests include quantum networking, quantum cryptography, and quantum machine learning. During his doctoral studies, he received the CEROC Cyber Excellence Student Research Award in 2025 for his contributions to quantum networking research.



**Edmund McFadden (Trevecca Nazarene University):** Dr. McFadden has over 30 years of healthcare consulting, operations, and information technology experience in multi-site, high-growth healthcare companies. He teaches undergraduate, master's, and doctorate-level courses. He has successfully built, led, and managed teams to deliver large-scale technology, M&A, and transformation programs. He is passionate about developing leaders, healthcare, and business.



**Megan Cales (University of Tennessee, Chattanooga):** Megan Cales is the Career Coordinator at UTC's Decosimo Success Center and founder of Sensory Bridges, LLC. Inspired by her experience supporting a neurodiverse child, she created the Brooks Band-a wearable device that helps individuals self-regulate voice volume through haptic feedback. Megan combines her background in career coaching and education with a passion for inclusive innovation. She is committed to creating solutions that empower individuals and build bridges across ability and opportunity.



**Laura Friggeri (Vanderbilt University):** Dr. Friggeri is a Staff Scientist in the Department of Cell and Developmental Biology at Vanderbilt University, working in a lab led by Ethan Lee.



**Scott Guelcher (Vanderbilt University):** Scott A. Guelcher, Ph.D, Professor of Chemical and Biomolecular Engineering, Director of the Digital Fabrication Minor, and a co-inventor of the cell-degradable poly(thioketal thiourethane) (PTKTUR) thermoplastic elastomer technology. Prof. Guelcher has over 20 years of experience with polyurethane chemistry, polymer characterization, biomedical devices, and preclinical assessment of the foreign body reaction to resorbable biomedical implants. He has over 10 years of experience as an expert witness in pelvic mesh and hernia mesh litigation.



**Heidi Hamm (Vanderbilt University):** Heidi E. Hamm, Ph.D. is the Aileen M. Lange and Annie Mary Lyle Chair in Cardiovascular Research, and Professor of Pharmacology at Vanderbilt University. She was Chair of Pharmacology from 2000-2015. Her research focuses on the structure and function of GTP binding proteins and the molecular mechanisms of signal transduction. Her laboratory has made key discoveries in G protein structure and mechanisms of activation by GPCRs and activation of effectors. She is a Fellow, American Association for the Advancement of Science and a member of the National Academy of Sciences.



**Donna Ingles (Vanderbilt University):** Director of Operations at Vanderbilt's Center for Technology Transfer & Commercialization (CTTC). Donna is responsible for leading operations and project management activities to optimize the Center's performance and effectiveness. Prior to joining CTTC, Donna served as Associate Director for Vanderbilt's Research Development and Support team after transitioning from her role as Assistant Director of Operations for the Vanderbilt Institute for Global Health. Prior to her career at Vanderbilt, Donna worked in drug discovery and then in epidemiology and global public health at Moffitt Cancer Center, including roles managing laboratories, project teams, and operations. Donna brings extensive experience in project development, implementation, and management across numerous fields, with a masters degree in medicinal chemistry from the University of Kansas and an MPH in epidemiology and global communicable diseases from the University of South Florida.





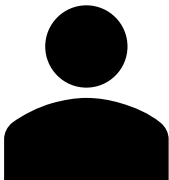
**Chris Jurich (Vanderbilt University):** Chris is a doctoral student who has contributed to the Yang lab's EnzyHTP package. His interest lies in problems at the interface of physics and ML modelling, and he is excited to work towards the commercialization of EnzyHTP and related technologies.



**Margaret Read (Vanderbilt University):** Margaret Read is a scientist trained at Harvard University where she served on faculty and currently serves as General Manager of Corporate Alliances at Vanderbilt University. She has decades of experience working with pharmaceutical companies in both scientific and directorial leadership positions for product development.



**Christopher Rowe (Vanderbilt University):** Dr. Rowe is Executive Director for industry collaborations in the Office of the Vice Provost for Research and Innovation working closely with the Center for Technology Transfer and Commercialization at Vanderbilt University. He leads the institution's efforts to create and expand mutually beneficial industry research collaborations that advance strategic scientific programs, solves industry-relevant research and development challenges, and provides channels to deploy and commercialize new technologies of substantial societal impact. He holds faculty appointments in engineering management and communication of science and technology. Prior to his current role, he served as associate dean for external relations in the Vanderbilt University School of Engineering.



**Margaret Shavlik (Vanderbilt University):** Margaret Shavlik is a Research Scholar at Vanderbilt University's Peabody College. With a Ph.D. in Developmental Psychology and a background in early childhood education research, she specializes in translating evidence-based practices into engaging, scalable interventions. She leads interdisciplinary efforts to develop and commercialize REED, a mobile app that enhances shared book reading between caregivers and preschool-aged children. Her work integrates developmental science, human-centered design, and AI to support early school readiness and address educational equity.



**Matt Freiberg (Vanderbilt University Medical Center):** Matt Freiberg is a physician scientist, Professor of Medicine, Dorothy and Lawrence Grossman Chair in Cardiology at VUMC, and a member of the American Society for Clinical Investigation. He founded and directs V-POLARIS, the Vanderbilt Center for Population Science and Randomized Clinical Trials, which supports research, quality improvement, and education, including NIH-supported K12 training program, through observational studies and clinical trials broadly involving cardiovascular disease and its risk factors, including alcohol and tobacco use.



**Jonathan Martin (Vanderbilt University Medical Center):** I am currently a postdoctoral research fellow at the Vanderbilt University Institute of Imaging Science, affiliated with the Vanderbilt University Medical Center Department of Radiology and Radiological Sciences. I am developing low-cost, ultra-low magnetic field MRI to increase the accessibility and clinical value of this medical imaging technology.



**Kevin Niswender (Vanderbilt University Medical Center):** Kevin Niswender is a physician scientist, Associate Professor of Medicine, Medical Director and a practicing endocrinologist with deep expertise in GLP-1 based therapeutic development, physiology, and molecular pharmacology. He has been the PI of NIH grants and holds patents for novel therapeutics.



**Hilary Tindle (Vanderbilt University Medical Center):** Hilary Tindle is a physician scientist, Associate Professor of Medicine, William Anderson Spickard, Jr., MD Chair in Medicine at Vanderbilt University Medical Center, and a member of the American Society for Clinical Investigation. She founded and directs ViTAL, the Vanderbilt Center for Tobacco, Addiction and Lifestyle, which supports research, clinical, and educational missions to reduce the burden of substance use. She has served as a principal investigator for multiple NIH-sponsored clinical trials for nicotine dependence in clinical populations, focusing on integrating precision approaches and repurposing of established medications for substance use.