

Boettcher Foundation INNOVATION SUMMIT 2024

KEYNOTE & PANELISTS



Stephen Kissler, PhD

2009 Scholar, Assistant Professor of Computer Science, University of Colorado Boulder

Stephen Kissler, a 2009 Boettcher Scholar and CU Boulder alumnus, earned his doctorate in applied mathematics from the University of Cambridge and worked for four years as a postdoctoral fellow at the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health before returning to Colorado. In his research, he develops mathematical models to analyze the spread of past epidemics and to prepare us for future ones. He's passionate about teaching, science communication, road biking, cooking, and Bayesian statistics.



Taylor Heap

2018 Scholar, third-year medical student, University of Colorado School of Medicine

Heap, a 2022 graduate of Colorado State University, participated in the Boettcher Scholar Collaboration Grant program with Dr. Melanie Cree-Green at Children's Hospital Colorado during her undergraduate years. Her research on Polycystic ovary syndrome (PCOS) and gender in adolescent populations highlighted the impact of biomedical research on vulnerable groups. These experiences led Heap to pursue medical school and continue patient and community-level advocacy. She plans to specialize in physical medicine and rehabilitation. Outside of academics, Heap enjoys outdoor activities, baking, and spending time with family, friends and her cat, Alfred.



Rushika Perera, PhD

Associate Professor, Microbiology, Immunology, and Pathology, Colorado State University

Perera studies mosquito-borne viruses and their interactions with human and mosquito hosts. Her work on host biochemistry's influence on arbovirus infections like dengue, chikungunya and Zika aims to develop new vaccines and identify disease severity markers. She received the WWBRA-Boettcher Foundation Early Career Investigator Award in 2016, the American Chemical Society Young Investigator award and the Boettcher Foundation COVID Biomedical Research Innovation Fund Award in 2020. During the COVID-19 pandemic, Perera established an antiviral testing center to evaluate drugs against SARS-CoV-

2. She co-founded and co-directs the Center for Metabolism of Infectious Diseases (C4MinD), studying links between metabolism, infection and the microbiome. Perera holds two undergraduate degrees from Goshen College and a PhD from Purdue University.



Melissa Reynolds, PhD

2010 Investigator, Associate Dean of Research, College of Natural Sciences, Colorado State University

Reynolds was the inaugural Boettcher Investigator at Colorado State University in 2010. She serves as director of the Panacea Life Sciences Cannabinoid Research Center and associate vice president for facilities in the Office of the Vice President for Research. Her students design new materials that are antimicrobial, ant clotting and pro-healing, which can be incorporated into current manufacturing processes, shortening the time from research to public use. Reynolds was recently inducted as a senior member of the National Academy of Inventors.



John A. Thompson, PhD

Associate Professor, Neurosurgery, University of Colorado Anschutz Medical Campus

Thompson holds secondary appointments in neurology and psychiatry. He earned his doctorate in neuroscience from Florida State University and completed postdoctoral training in systems neuroscience at the University of Washington and University of Colorado Anschutz Medical Campus. His research focuses on neurophysiology, deep brain stimulation and neurobiological mechanisms underlying motor disorders and sleep dysregulation. Thompson has published extensively on neurostimulation and neural circuit dysfunction, with funding to investigate adaptive neurostimulation strategies. He co-directs a lab with Dr. Daniel R. Kramer at CU-AMC. Thompson has mentored numerous early-career scientists and is a faculty member in bioengineering and the Modern Human Anatomy program.

BOETTCHER STAFF & TRUSTEE SPEAKERS



Tony Frank

Trustee & Past Chair, Boettcher Foundation Board of Trustees | Chancellor, CSU System

Tony Frank is chancellor of the Colorado State University system, where he is proud to work closely with faculty, staff, students, and alumni. He served as CSU's president for 10 years, following roles as provost and vice president for research. Tony's commitment to the mission of the land-grant university was shaped by his own experiences growing up on a farm in rural Illinois, and later by his experience as a student, faculty member, and researcher. He earned his bachelor's degree in biology from Wartburg College and his Doctor of Veterinary Medicine from the University of Illinois. He completed a PhD and residencies in pathology and toxicology at Purdue University and served on the faculty at Oregon State University before joining Colorado State in 1993. His research interests have included toxicologic and infectious disease pathology, and he has authored and co-authored numerous scientific publications.



Katie Kramer

President and CEO, Boettcher Foundation

As president and CEO, Katie has come full-circle with the Boettcher Foundation. She was selected as a Boettcher Scholar in 1993 and has been at the Foundation in various roles since 1997, including as the director of the scholarship program and vice president — a title she assumed at the age of 26. Katie has been recognized as one of the Denver Business Journal’s “40 Under 40” and the Colorado Women’s Chamber of Commerce’s “Top 25 Most Powerful Women.” A fourth-generation Colorado native, Katie attended the University of Colorado Boulder, where she was a Presidents Leadership Class Scholar and honors graduate at the Leeds School of Business. In 2009, she completed her Executive MBA at the University of Denver’s Daniels College of Business.



Gregory Moore

Chair, Boettcher Foundation Board of Trustees | Founder & CEO, KLOWTIFY

Gregory Moore is the Co-Founder and CEO of KLOWTIFY, a Colorado-based media services company, to help leaders and brands level up. He was the former Executive Editor, pioneering Editor-in-Chief, and early architect of expert news programming at The Expert Press, a Canadian-based content agency that works with CEOs and other top executives to create expert commentary published in U.S. media outlets. Prior to his work at The Expert Press, Gregory spent 14 years as editor of The Denver Post. During that time the newspaper won four consecutive Pulitzer Prizes, including for coverage of the Aurora Theater shootings. His journalism career has spanned more than 40 years, with stops in Dayton and Cleveland, OH and 16 years at the Boston Globe, where he rose to managing editor.



Vanessa Roman

Director of Scholarships & Foundation Programs, Boettcher Foundation

Vanessa oversees the Boettcher Foundation programs including the Boettcher Scholarship, Doers & Difference Makers Fellowship, and the Webb-Waring Biomedical Research Awards. Prior to joining the Foundation team, Vanessa served as the Head of Outreach at AdvanceEDU, a Denver nonprofit where she managed the organization’s recruitment and outreach efforts. Prior to AdvanceEDU, Vanessa spent nine years in various roles in the Office of Admissions at the University of Colorado Boulder. Vanessa has dedicated her career to helping all students access higher education and postsecondary opportunities. Vanessa attended CU Boulder as a Boettcher Scholar, where she earned a Bachelor’s Degree in psychology and Master’s Degree in educational, foundations, practices and policy.