Biomedicine researchers join ranks of Boettcher Investigators[1]
[2]

Five University of Colorado researchers have been named to the 2025 class of Boettcher Investigators, each receiving a $250,000 grant from the Boettcher Foundation's Webb-Waring Biomedical Research Awards Program.

This year's class, announced May 22 by the Boettcher Foundation[3] and the Colorado BioScience Association[4] (CBSA), represents the next generation of scientific excellence and marks another milestone in the Boettcher Foundation's 16-year commitment to strengthening Colorado's biomedical research ecosystem.

The Webb-Waring Biomedical Research Awards provide crucial early career support and position recipients at leading academic and research institutions to compete for additional private, state and federal research funding. Each grant supports up to three years of independent scientific research.

The CU scientists and their research topics are:

CU Anschutz Medical Campus

Erin K. Englund, Ph.D., Department of Radiology, School of Medicine: Structural and functional evaluation of skeletal muscle in type 2 diabetes with advanced, quantitative MRI.

Anna Helena Jonsson, M.D., Ph.D., Division of Rheumatology, Department of Medicine, School of Medicine: Determining the pathogenic roles of granzyme K + CD8 T cells unexpectedly expanded in rheumatoid arthritis synovium and other diseased tissues.

Yunsik Kang, Ph.D., Department of Cell and Developmental Biology, School of Medicine: Mechanisms of tweek-mediated lipid transfer during astrocyte phagocytosis.

Alexandra Nguyen, Ph.D., Department of Cell and Developmental Biology, School of Medicine: Uncovering the molecular mechanisms of Cohesin regulation in DNA repair and disease.

CU Boulder

Jennifer H. Hill, Ph.D., Department of Molecular, Cellular and Developmental Biology, BioFrontiers Institute: Microbiota shaping of human islets.

With these five new awardees, CU will have 75 Boettcher Investigators[5] receiving over $17.6 million in biomedical research grants over the course of the program.

The 2025 Class of Boettcher Investigators also includes two Colorado State University researchers, Lynn Pezzanite, D.V.M., Ph.D., and Christopher Vaaga, Ph.D., for a total of seven researchers receiving $1.75 million from the foundation. Boettcher Investigators are advancing research in osteoarthritis, autism spectrum disorder, insulin-producing cells, type 2 diabetes, cancer and autoimmune diseases, and developmental and neurological disorders. Read more here.[6]

"We are delighted to support our 2025 Boettcher Investigators, and as champions of their work, we are confident that these researchers will continue to spark new discoveries and drive innovation in medicine," said Katie Kramer, president and CEO of the Boettcher Foundation. "The far-reaching impact of our Investigators' research extends well beyond the lab – each advancement sets in motion a ripple effect that benefits patients, strengthens Colorado's scientific community and inspires future breakthroughs. We are proud to invest in these remarkable scientists, whose dedication and creativity are shaping a healthier future for all."

Since its inception, the Webb-Waring Biomedical Research Awards Program has supported 113 Boettcher Investigators, including this year's class, and awarded close to $27 million in grant funding. These researchers have gone on to secure more than $150 million in additional research funding from federal, state and private sources.

“Colorado BioScience Association is grateful to the Boettcher Foundation for its continued investment in the next generation of scientific leaders in our state,” said Elyse Blazevich, president and CEO of Colorado BioScience Association. “The Webb-Waring Biomedical Research Awards provide essential early career funding that empowers researchers to remain in Colorado and advance their discoveries within our world-class academic and research institutions. We are honored to celebrate the accomplishments of the 2025 class of Boettcher Investigators.”

For more information about the Webb-Waring Biomedical Research Awards Program, visit the Boettcher Foundation website[7].

Five questions for Susan Adams[8]

By Janice Thorpe

This year's COLTT Conference promises a deep dive with a plenary panel focused on AI from Campus to Career: Preparing Students for a Shifting Educational and Workforce Landscape. Guiding this conversation will be Susan Adams, a leader in Colorado and globally in instructional design and faculty development whose career has focused on strategically integrating technology to enhance learning and teaching in higher education.

Adams is uniquely positioned to facilitate a nuanced discussion on AI’s challenges and opportunities as an expert in innovative curriculum design. Her passion and commitment led her to found Women in AI Colorado, an initiative dedicated to uplifting and upskilling our global society, with a particular focus on empowering women. Adams will share more insights at the 27th annual edition of COLTT[9], set for July 30 and 31 at CU Boulder.

1. How do you envision AI transforming curriculum and teaching, particularly in preparing students for evolving career demands?

I truly believe we’re on the brink of a world where every student builds their own AI learning coach – an always-on thought partner that organizes assignments, scans for internships and adapts instruction to individual learning preferences.

This level of personalization will push faculty to raise the bar, expecting more from students because they have such powerful tools. We’ve long aimed to shift from “sage on the stage,” and AI will inspire faculty to design experiences where students learn to collaborate with AI, craft effective prompts, critically evaluate outputs and translate insights into real-world solutions. This aligns perfectly with authentic learning design, helping students see how concepts apply directly to their future careers.

2. What ethical considerations are paramount as AI becomes more integrated into higher education, and how can faculty facilitate these crucial conversations?

There are several key ethical questions. Firstly, whose data are AI models trained on, and who ultimately benefits? While AI outputs can be biased, we have agency to critique them and even provide different data. Secondly, how transparent are AI decision-making processes, both from the user’s perspective and from the developers like OpenAI or Claude? Institutions need to analyze this to engage ethically. Finally, what biases might be encoded in these models, and who is being harmed by them? Asking “who is being harmed?” specifically can lead to more holistic conversations and “aha” moments. Faculty can facilitate these discussions by empowering students to ask these questions and understand their own agency in using these tools.

3. If you could design a futuristic AI-powered classroom, what key features would it include to best prepare students for an AI-driven workforce?

I would build an “AI collaborative lab” – a real-time workspace where each student works alongside an AI assistant. This lab would focus on relevant micro-projects tied to local industry needs, essentially making every classroom an AI innovation lab, as suggested by Beth Rudden in her keynote presentation at COLTT. It’s about enabling students and faculty to do deep thinking on how current concepts align with career goals and industry impacts. The lab would also provide instant scaffolding and feedback on projects, helping students reach higher-order thinking. This experience teaches not just subject matter but the critical skill of partnering effectively with AI in problem-solving, ensuring equity and access to these advanced learning models.

4. If you had one superpower to transform higher education in the AI era, what would it be and how would it help students transition from campus to career?

My superpower would be “Contextual Career Visioning.” This would allow any student, at any moment, to project their current coursework into concrete career pathways, showing them precisely how each skill they’re learning maps to real-world roles and the competencies they’ll need next. It’s about making that connection instantly clear and tangible, potentially even connecting them with local employers or alumni for mentorship. This visioning and mentoring piece would directly bridge their academic journey to their professional future.

5. As the plenary panel facilitator, your role is to gather insights from multiple perspectives: workforce, vendors and ethics/philosophical experts – no small challenge. What’s your game plan to ensure attendees walk away not just informed, but with actionable strategies? What can we expect you to explore with these diverse voices?

My game plan is to orchestrate a dynamic exploration that moves us beyond the common “fear and prohibition” narrative, focusing instead on how to harness AI as a creative collaborator. What makes this panel unique is how these perspectives intersect. Beth Rudden brings the ethical foundation, helping us understand what trust and transparency look like in practice. Jennifer Henderson bridges the gap between what we’re teaching and what the evolving workforce actually needs. Francis Hoang shows us how to implement AI tools without losing our human-centered values. Together, they’ll help us see the full picture. Attendees can expect a session that challenges assumptions and equips attendees with actionable frameworks to thoughtfully integrate AI, ensuring both students and institutions can truly flourish in this new era.

Learn more about COLTT’s AI panel discussion, July 31 at CU Boulder, on the COLTT website.[10] Secure your spot at the COLTT Conference now on the registration site.[11]

Four-campus commencement roundup[12]

Thousands of graduates across the four CU campuses celebrated commencement earlier this month.

The university conferred more than 14,800 degrees during spring ceremonies.

“Our graduates will go on to make a difference in science, health care, business, public service, the arts and countless other areas,” President Todd Saliman wrote in his recent newsletter.[13] “Our newest CU alumni will also leave their mark on their communities, the state of Colorado, the nation and the world. CU’s Class of 2025 includes thousands of remarkable stories – from being the first in their family to earn a college degree to leaving the university driven to pay it forward and help others.”

CU Boulder conferred a record 10,138 degrees – earned by 9,934 graduates – during a jubilant commencement ceremony, while an estimated 30,000-plus family members and friends looked on. Read more in CU Boulder Today.[14]

UCCS conferred more than 1,600 degrees to students from the Class of 2025, with just over 1,100 graduates in

attendance for the Spring 2025 Commencement ceremonies at the Broadmoor World Arena. Read more in Communique.[15]

CU Denver ceremonies included more than 2,000 graduates from 40 states and more than 70 countries, including Chile, Kenya, Korea and Australia. Read more in CU Denver News.[16]

At **CU Anschutz,** over 1,000 students graduated, including nearly 180 who became doctors of medicine at the Hooding and Oath Ceremony at Boettcher Commons on campus, marking the School of Medicine's 142nd year of training tomorrow's healers. Read more in CU Anschutz Today.[17]

CU marketing campaign garners more accolades[18]

Love, Colorado, CU's systemwide marketing campaign, has won a Web Excellence Award.

CU's campaign won in the category of Advertising & Marketing: Integrated Campaign[19]. The Web Excellence Awards, also known as WE-Awards, promotes excellence on the web by recognizing digital creativity and innovation.

In highlighting the reasons for the award, reviewers noted, "Instead of leading with institutional messaging, the site centers on authentic narratives of how CU advances what Coloradans value most – from protecting natural resources to driving economic growth."

In November 2024, Love, Colorado, won gold honors in the digital advertising category of the national Education Digital Marketing Awards.

Love, Colorado[20] launched last Colorado Day, Aug. 1, 2024, with a series of social media posts inviting Coloradans to participate in an open dialogue about the state's attributes they most appreciate and value. This year, the campaign will focus on how members of the CU community across the four campuses are working on what Coloradans care about.

The campaign website LoveColorado.com[20] asks visitors to "Tell us what you love about Colorado" and provides stories of how CU students, faculty and staff are working on those values.

From breakthrough research to mentoring Colorado businesses, the University of Colorado is on a mission to highlight CU's impact on Coloradans' everyday lives and show how it all comes from a shared love for our state.

The CU community is encouraged to participate in the campaign by using the hashtag #DearColorado and engaging with the CU system social accounts on LinkedIn, Meta and X platforms.

Click here[21] to find campaign-themed background images for virtual meetings and other material you can download and promote.

Students begin final year of study toward M.D./M.S. dual degree in aerospace engineering [22]

AI ghosts are coming: Is that comforting or creepy? [23]

Center for Study of Government and the Individual to host civic discourse conference [24]

Bryn Harris puts faculty service in focus [25]

CU Department of Medicine senior faculty help support promising junior researchers [26]

Federal transition update: DOE indirect cost cap preliminary injunction, more[27]

From May 23, this update from CU Federal Relations and Counsel includes information on DOE Indirect Cost Cap Preliminary Injunction, NSF Indirect Cost Cap Pause and New Grant Conditions, DoD Memo on Indirect Costs, DOJ Civil Rights Fraud Initiative, Block on Ed RIFs, HHS MAHA Report, CDHE Statement on ASSET, and Temporary Block on DHS Prohibiting International Student Enrollment at Harvard.

Click here to read the post.[28]

For the latest communications and federal memos, please visit the CU System Federal Transitions Updates[29] page.

Brooks named president and CEO of George W. Bush Presidential Center [30]

Shilo Brooks, former Bruce D. Benson Center for the Study of Western Civilization senior leader, has been named president and Chief Executive Officer of the George W. Bush Presidential Center. He will also join the Bush Foundation's board of directors.

Brooks is currently the executive director of Princeton University's James Madison Program in American Ideals and Institutions, focused on exploring enduring questions of American constitutional law and Western political thought.

"Shilo is a brilliant thinker who has developed programs that help people grasp America's founding principles and civic responsibilities," said President George W. Bush. "He understands and professes the importance of leadership in our society. Shilo's expertise in civil discourse, civic literacy and American political thought align with the values and mission of the George W. Bush Presidential Center. The energy and intellect he will bring to our policy work and community engagement will benefit the North Texas community and beyond. Laura and I are thrilled to welcome Shilo and his family back home to Texas."

In his role at CU's Bruce D. Benson Center for the Study of Western Civilization, Brooks led programming that championed civil discourse, civic literacy and the exploration of American political thought. He also designed and directed the school's Engineering Leadership Program, which creates cross-disciplinary opportunities for students to examine technological advancements' moral and political implications.?

Brooks writes and lectures widely on topics in politics, leadership and the humanities, and is author of the forthcoming book "The Ambitious Soul." He frequently appears on podcasts and in the media. His upcoming podcast project with

The Free Press, Old School, will focus on encouraging intellectual engagement and personal growth through reflection on transformative books and the guidance they provide for everyday life.

“The Bush Center is uniquely positioned to lead a national conversation about the enduring principles and ideas that animate the American spirit,” Brooks said. “The Bush Center’s focus on engaged citizenship, compassionate leadership and ensuring opportunity through freedom and accountability deeply resonates with me. I am honored and excited to join the Bush Center’s excellent team, whose commitments to scholarship, public service and public education shine edifying light on the world, our nation, my home state of Texas and the North Texas community.”

Concurrent with his appointment at the Bush Center, Brooks will join SMU as Professor of the Practice in the Political Science Department, Senior Fellow at the Center for Presidential History, and Senior Fellow at the Tower Center for Public Policy and International Affairs. Brooks has also held faculty appointments at Bowdoin College and the University of Virginia. He earned his bachelor’s degree from St. John’s College in Annapolis and his Ph.D. in political science from Boston College. He is a West Texas native, and he and his wife have one daughter.

Hagelin receives 2025 Faculty Mentoring Award [31]

Plummer leads entrepreneurial excellence as El Pomar Chair [32]

How NOAA funding cuts could make it harder to predict and prepare for severe weather[33]

Embracing and empowering an older population: How Colorado is preparing for its fast approaching future[34]

Space mold! UCCS and Pikes Peak State College students sending experiment to space[35]

Links
[1] https://connections.cu.edu/spotlights/biomedicine-researchers-join-ranks-boettcher-investigators[2] https://connections.cu.edu/sites/default/files/boettcher_foundation625_x_380_email_05-29-2025.jpg[3] https://boettcherfoundation.org/[4] https://cobioscience.com/[5] https://www.cu.edu/bfww/cu-investigators[6] https://cobioscience.com/boettcher-foundation-awards-1-75-million-to-colorados-leading-biomedical-researchers/[7] http://boettcherfoundation.org/webb-waring-biomedical-research/[8] https://connections.cu.edu/stories/five-questions-susan-adams[9] https://energyconferencenetwork.swoogo.com/coltt25/7868204[10] https://energyconferencenetwork.swoogo.com/COLTT25/panel[11] https://energyconferencenetwork.swoogo.com/coltt25/begin[12] https://connections.cu.edu/stories/four-campus-commencement-roundup[13] https://president.cu.edu/newsletter/may-2025/cu-research-changes-lives-every-day[14]

https://www.colorado.edu/today/cu-boulder-turns-class-2025-out-world[15]
https://communique.uccs.edu/?p=164920[16] https://news.ucdenver.edu/cu-denver-graduates-celebrate-and-prepare-for-the-future/[17] https://news.cuanschutz.edu/medicine/graduation-ceremony-2025[18]
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