Five CU researchers named to 2024 class of Boettcher Investigators[1]
[2]

Five University of Colorado scientists have been named to the Boettcher Foundation's 2024 class of Boettcher Investigators, outstanding biomedical researchers who will receive grant funding through the Boettcher Foundation's Webb-Waring Biomedical Research Awards Program.

Each recipient is awarded $250,000, increased from $235,000 in 2023, which will advance up to three years of independent scientific research. The $1.25 million total in biomedical research funding will be available to the CU early career investigators beginning June 1.

Now marking its 15th year, the Webb-Waring Biomedical Awards program supports and retains top scientific talent in Colorado and allows Boettcher Investigators to compete for private and federal grants. The program's impressive track record of success included $21.1 million in federal grant funding received by Boettcher Investigators in 2023.

This year's CU Boettcher Investigators represent the University of Colorado Anschutz Medical Campus, the University of Colorado Boulder and, for just the second time in program history, the University of Colorado Colorado Springs.

The CU researchers and their research topics are:

CU Anschutz Medical Campus

Benjamin J. Kopecky, M.D., Ph.D., assistant professor, Division of Cardiology, Section of Heart Failure/Transplant: Dissecting the smooth muscle cell pathobiology driving cardiac allograft vasculopathy.

Jennifer McKey, Ph.D., assistant professor, Department of Pediatrics, Section of Developmental Biology: Investigating the contribution of follicle activation in the perinatal ovary to the establishment of female fertility.

Jessica Nelson, Ph.D., assistant professor, Department of Cell and Developmental Biology: Molecular-genetic mechanisms underlying establishment of sensory thresholds.

CU Boulder

Andrew Quesada Tan, Ph.D., assistant professor, Department of Integrative Physiology and Director of the Sensorimotor Recovery and Neuroplasticity Lab: Identifying predictive biomarkers for intermittent hypoxia induced motor recovery and learning in persons with incomplete spinal cord injury (isci).

UCCS

Marissa Baranauskas, Ph.D., assistant professor, Department of Human Physiology and Nutrition: Implications for the timing of energy availability on menstrual cycle function.

Announced May 22, the 2024 Class of Boettcher Investigators also includes researchers from Colorado State University, National Jewish Health and the University of Denver, for a total of eight researchers receiving $2 million from the foundation. Read more here.[3]

"We are thrilled to support our 2024 Boettcher Investigators, and as proud investors in their work, we are optimistic that these distinguished researchers will persist in expanding the frontiers of knowledge and innovation in medicine," said Katie Kramer, president and CEO of the Boettcher Foundation. "The groundbreaking research of our Investigators not only promises to revolutionize health care, but also marks a significant milestone in our commitment to advancing the well-being of Coloradans as we commemorate this special 15th anniversary for our Webb-Waring Biomedical Research Awards."

With these five new awardees, CU will have 70 Boettcher Investigators[4] receiving over $16.3 million in biomedical research grants over the course of the program.

Since its inception, the Webb-Waring Biomedical Research Awards program has advanced the work of 106 Boettcher Investigators, with more than $24 million in grant funds, including the 2024 class. The researchers have attracted more than $150 million in additional independent research funding from federal, state, and private sources.

“Colorado BioScience Association thanks Boettcher Foundation for its long-term support of Colorado’s top life sciences researchers,” said Elyse Blazevich, president and CEO of Colorado BioScience Association. “The Webb-Waring Biomedical Awards program demonstrates the importance of investing in early career researchers. They are developing revolutionary technologies that will change patient lives. We are proud of the incredible breakthroughs made by more than 100 Boettcher Investigators over the last 15 years.”

CU continues sustainability strides across four campuses[5]

New construction projects proposed for the University of Colorado Boulder are the latest steps by CU leadership to continue making progress on sustainability efforts.

A new solar array planned for CU Boulder’s East Campus and a slate of maintenance projects that will reduce greenhouse gas emissions received preliminary approval from the Board of Regents Finance Committee at its May 22 meeting. The items are expected to receive approval from the full board at its meeting June 20-21 in Pueblo.

The $7.8 million solar array, expected to be running by January 2026, will generate roughly 1.4 million kilowatt hours annually, offsetting a significant amount of CU Boulder’s total electricity usage. CU Boulder already has solar arrays at 16 main campus buildings, producing 2.6 million kilowatt hours in 2022-23. Multiple solar arrays also are generating energy at the University of Colorado Colorado Springs and the University of Colorado Denver.

The facility improvement projects in 18 buildings – equal to about 16% of the total gross square footage at the main CU Boulder campus – will cost $5.8 million. Utility and operational savings are projected to total $377,000 annually. Improvements include replacement of steam traps and more energy-efficient lighting and water fixtures.

Last week’s meeting included presentations detailing many ways in which all four CU campuses are continuing to improve sustainability and lessen their environmental impact. At the direction of the Board of Regents, sustainability goals[6] are stipulated in CU’s systemwide strategic plan, and CU system administration compiles campus sustainability reports every two years; the most recent was released last December[7].

Potable water consumption was down at all four campuses in 2022-23 compared to the previous year; landscaping with native plants and grasses rather than thirsty turf is among the contributing factors. Rates of recycling and composting are also on the rise across the CU system. Transportation solutions include bus passes, improved infrastructure for bicycles and greater use and availability of electric vehicles and EV charging stations.

CU also is educating students who plan to bring environmental expertise to the workforce in Colorado and beyond. CU Boulder offers about 100 sustainability-focused courses for undergraduate and graduate students. CU Denver boasts 21 such courses, as well as a new master’s degree in sustainable business. At the University of Colorado Anschutz Medical Campus, the School of Medicine’s Climate and Health program aims to illuminate how climate change is affecting human health.

Other recent sustainability strides highlighted at last week’s meeting:

At CU Boulder, the campus released a Climate Action Plan[8] in April and plans regular reporting on progress toward goals, which will be facilitated by a new Sustainability Executive Council.

As UCCS moves from measurement and analysis to implementation of new efficiencies and deferred maintenance projects, the campus has made two new hires who will complete energy performance projects.

CU Denver, which is hiring a sustainability manager this summer, shares the Auraria Campus with two other institutions. The Auraria Sustainable Campus Program recently purchased a commercial composter and hired a compost operations manager. The campus also has received funding for upgrades to heating-cooling systems that will save energy.

CU Anschutz began energy master planning this year, with completion – including the hiring of a team of experts – expected in 2025.

See more details from last week's presentation here.[9]

Register today for Classic COLTT: Forward Into the Past[10]

Join us for the 27th Colorado Learning and Teaching with Technology (COLTT) conference[11], themed "Classic COLTT: Forward Into the Past," set for July 31-Aug. 1 at CU Boulder's Wolf Law Building.

Pre-conference workshops on July 31 will address in-demand topics, such as the new Colorado ADA compliance laws and the latest in AI technology for the classroom. A full day of sessions and the keynote will follow on Aug. 1, diving deeply into how we blend timeless experience and wisdom with modern agility in navigating the ed tech landscape.

Connect with education innovators from over 30 Colorado higher education institutions through exchange and collaboration to prepare for what lies ahead. Schedule and program content details are now available[12].

Keynote speaker: Deborah Keyek-Franssen, Ph.D.

Keyek-Franssen.[13] a trailblazer in the field of technology and higher education, will deliver our keynote address. With over two decades of experience, Keyek-Franssen has shaped policies, championed equity and transformed classrooms through innovative tech integration. The insights provided in her keynote — There Should Have Been Hoverboards. We Got AI Instead — will inspire and challenge us to think critically about the future.

"It's hard not to be nostalgic for a future that never materialized when we are living a present defined by technological disruption occurring at a rate that feels beyond human scale," she said. "Realizing that the forecasts of our past are not our current reality can help us replace the effort of prediction-making to one of preparation. Let's call on the past to hoverboard smoothly forward."

Media Archaeology Lab Pop-Up!

COLTT is thrilled to host a collaboratively curated pop-up at COLTT 2024 with the Media Archaeology Lab[14] (MAL). MAL is a community-driven hub for preserving and exploring the history of technology. Through our COLTT/MAL pop-up, "cross-disciplinary, experimental research, teaching, and creative practice converge, using one of the largest collections in the world of still-functioning obsolete media."

Come along to explore pathways through the history of technology and imagine an alternative present and future.

Register today

Get immersed, involved, and inspired at COLTT 2024! Register today[15]. Early bird discounts are available until July 17.

Curious if your institution provides sponsored registration? Send your inquiry to COLTT@executivevents.com[16].

The light or the content? What we know about screens and sleep disruption [17]

Club Q Memorial Art Project pieces unveiled [18]

New tool available to researchers; two training sessions available in June [19]

Unraveling the connections between loneliness and emotional eating [20]

Lovenduski named INSTAAR director [21]

Meyer wins prestigious nutrition award for work in sustainable food systems [22]

Marquez honored with city's Cesar Chavez Award [23]

CU Denver is Colorado's first university recognized for its efforts to enroll, support Asian students[24]

CU Boulder study: U.S. health data infrastructure needs to evolve before next pandemic [25]

Pets are great, but they can bring stress and trade-offs [26]

Links
[1] https://connections.cu.edu/spotlights/five-cu-researchers-named-2024-class-boettcher-investigators[2] https://connections.cu.edu/sites/default/files/boettcher_top-group.jpg[3] https://boettcherfoundation.org/boettcher-foundation-awards-2-million-to-colorados-leading-biomedical-researchers/[4] https://www.cu.edu/bfww/cu-investigators[5] https://connections.cu.edu/stories/cu-continues-sustainability-strides-across-four-campuses[6] https://go.boarddocs.com/co/cu/Board.nsf/files/D5BU7G7AABC6/$file/2024_Sustainability%20Strat%20Plan%20Finance_Presentation%20Version_Final.pdf[7] https://www.cu.edu/doc/sustainability-report-2023pdf[8] https://www.colorado.edu/sustainability/climate-action-plan[9] https://go.boarddocs.com/co/cu/Board.nsf/files/D5HTX77974AB/$file/2024_Campus%20Biennial%20Sustainability%20Reporting_To%20Post%20Revised.pdf[10] https://connections.cu.edu/stories/register-today-classic-coltt-forward-past[11] https://www.cu.edu/coltt[12] https://www.cu.edu/coltt/coltt-2024-program[13] https://www.cu.edu/coltt/2024-keynote-speaker[14] https://www.mediaarchaeologylab.com/[15] https://www.cu.edu/coltt/2024-registration[16] mailto:COLTT@executivevents.com[17] https://connections.cu.edu/stories/light-or-content-what-we-know-about-screens-and-sleep-disruption[18] https://connections.cu.edu/stories/club-q-memorial-art-project-pieces-unveiled[19] https://connections.cu.edu/stories/new-tool-available-researchers-two-training-sessions-available-june[20] https://connections.cu.edu/stories/unraveling-connections-between-loneliness-and-emotional-eating[21] https://connections.cu.edu/people/lovenduski-named-instaar-director[22] https://connections.cu.edu/people/meyer-wins-prestigious-nutrition-award-work-sustainable-food-systems[23] https://connections.cu.edu/people/marquez-honored-city-s-cesar-chavez-award[24] https://connections.cu.edu/itn/cu-denver-colorados-first-university-recognized-its-efforts-enroll-support-asian-students[25] https://connections.cu.edu/itn/cu-boulder-study-us-health-data-infrastructure-needs-evolve-next-pandemic[26] https://connections.cu.edu/itn/pets-are-great-they-can-bring-stress-and-trade-offs