



# TEXAS LIFE SCIENCES SUMMIT

Texas Healthcare & Bioscience Institute

**APRIL 2, 2024**



# Unlock the Power of Innovation

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**The Texas Healthcare and Bioscience Institute (THBI)** is the statewide industry association and economic development organization advocating for and working to build the business of life science and biotech industry in Texas. Our membership consists of biopharmaceutical companies, medical device manufacturers, research institutions, economic development entities, and service companies, providing unparalleled networking and synergy to effectively address the needs of Texas' growing life science and biotech community. Just as the Texas life science industry is committed to expanding the boundaries of science by discovering, developing, and delivering innovative, life-saving medications and medical devices to patients, THBI is dedicated to creating an environment where such discoveries flourish and thrive.

With a focus on using advocacy as a tool to create a more favorable business environment for various healthcare entities, we work with government agencies and industry leaders to support and promote the industry to ensure the passage of effective legislation and a steady regulatory environment at the state and federal levels and through more comprehensive industry engagement to expand networking, collaboration, and strategic industry growth.

THBI is the leading health policy voice in the state, influencing legislation that has led to economic investment and medical breakthroughs for over 25 years. Our mission is to support the state's biomedical and health care technology community to discover, produce, and deliver products that benefit society; to provide a forum to identify, analyze, and develop strategies to address barriers to industry growth; and to communicate to public officials, providers, patients, and the general public, the value of the state's health care technology community for the health and economic well-being of our nation's citizens and the economic growth of Texas.

Become a THBI member to be a part of the important policy initiatives our industry is working on. Visit [www.thbi.com](http://www.thbi.com) to stay informed about upcoming events and opportunities or contact us directly at [info@thbi.com](mailto:info@thbi.com).

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## SOCIAL MEDIA

Join THBI on social media during the event and follow us to stay in touch.





# TEXAS LIFE SCIENCES Summit Sponsors

Co-Host:



CANCER PREVENTION & RESEARCH  
INSTITUTE OF TEXAS

Presented by:



Karlin  
Real Estate



Industry Reception Co-Host:





## THBI BOARD OF DIRECTORS

*Thank you to our board members for your continued support.*

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VICE CHAIRMAN

Texas State University

**Bradley Westmoreland**  
TREASURER

Genentech, Inc.

**Victoria Ford, MPA**  
PRESIDENT & CEO

Texas Healthcare and  
Bioscience Institute

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**Brynna Clark**

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**Holli Hill**

Novartis Pharmaceuticals

**Kyle Kamrath**

Vertex Pharmaceuticals

**Mark Moreno**

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MD Anderson Cancer Center

**Jennifer Sharpe Potter**

UT Health San Antonio

**Ramamoorthy Ramesh**

Rice University

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Johnson & Johnson

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Eli Lilly & Company

**Jeffrey L. Wade**

Lexicon Pharmaceuticals

**Yancy Williams**

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## THBI STAFF

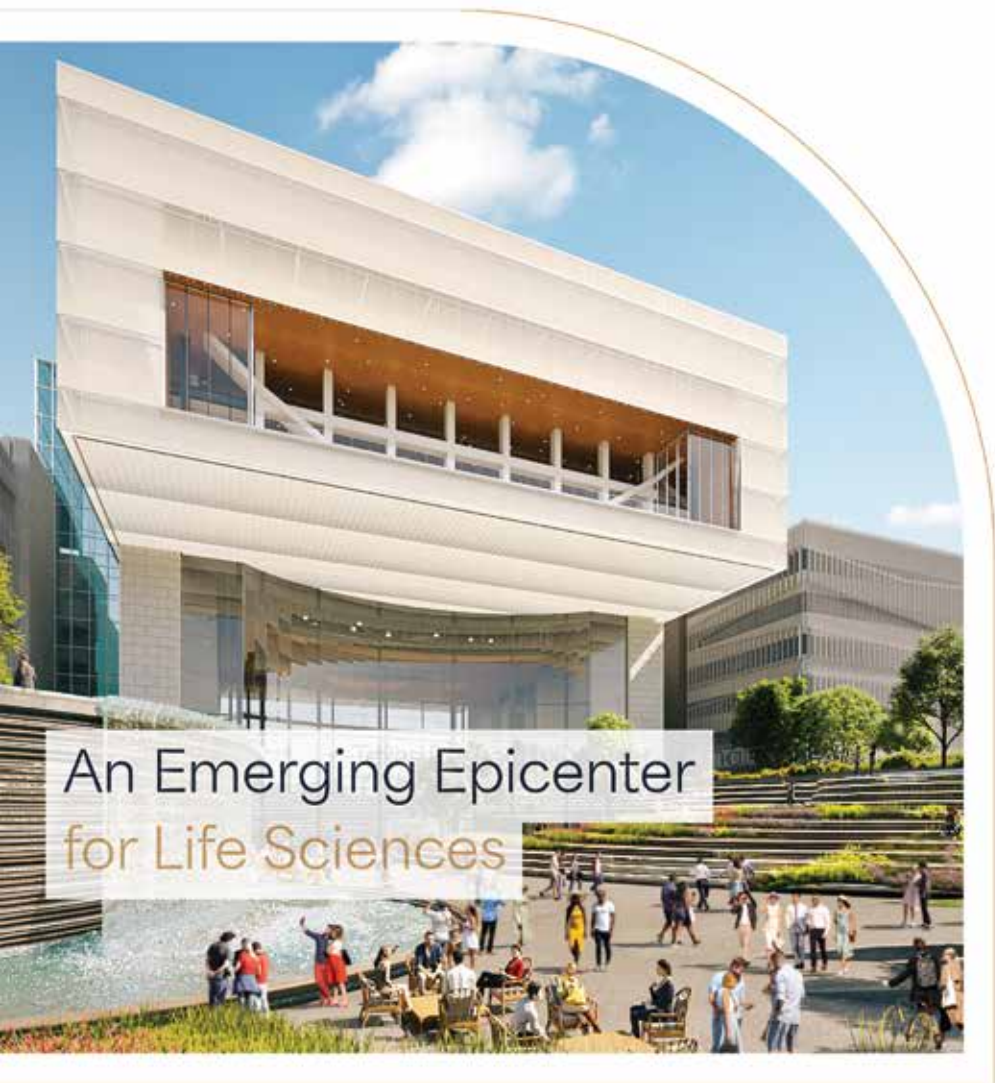
**Victoria Ford, MPA**, President & CEO

**Miranda Goodsheller**, Director of Operations &  
Economic Development

**Danielle Lobsinger Bush**, Director of Policy

**Julia Perkins**, Director of Membership & Programming

**Patricia Shipton**, Counsel



TEXAS RESEARCH QUARTER | PLANO, TEXAS

An integrated life sciences campus planned in Plano, Texas with state-of-the-art facilities to support research & development, cGMP manufacturing, and a range of activities across the life sciences industry



# SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

# APRIL 2

## 9:00-9:40 Registration, Networking and Expo

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## 9:40-9:45 Opening Remarks

- **Victoria Ford, MPA**, President and CEO, Texas Healthcare & Bioscience Institute
- 

## 9:45-10:35 Building the Innovations of Tomorrow

Last month, THBI released “Texas Life Sciences: Building the Innovations of Tomorrow”, a report covering the Texas workforce. This panel will include an overview of the report highlights with an in-depth discussion of the specific strategies included in the report for addressing industry challenges related to expanding the workforce and creating greater opportunity for technology transfer.

### Speakers:

- **Linnea Fletcher, Ph.D.**, Biotechnology Department Chair, Austin Community College and Director, InnovATEBIO National Biotechnology Education Center
- **Gabby Everett, Ph.D.**, Director of Business Operations & Strategy, Site Head for BioLabs Pegasus Park
- **Bradley Phelan, MBA**, Assistant Vice President of Technology Commercialization & Business Development, UT Southwestern Medical Center
- **Moderator: Victoria Ford, MPA**, President and CEO, Texas Healthcare & Bioscience Institute



## 10:40-11:30 **Surviving the Valley of Death**

Each life science and biotech company developing a new product or innovation must face the seemingly insurmountable obstacles to getting that product to the marketplace. This panel will discuss the many tools and strategies needed to “survive the valley of death” and make a successful market launch.

### **Speakers:**

- **Kristen Doyle**, Deputy Executive Officer and General Counsel, Cancer Prevention and Research Institute of Texas
- **Kirk Macolini**, President and Principal Consultant, InteliSpark, LLC
- **Marcus Nelson**, Vice President of Business Analytics, Texas Medical Center
- **Omid Veisesh, Ph.D.**, Associate Professor, CPRIT Scholar in Cancer Research and Director of Rice Biotechnology Launch Pad
- **Moderator: Dan Hargrove, JD, LLM**, Founder, Texas BioTechVentures, LLC

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## 11:30-12:45 **Lunch, Networking and Expo**

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## 12:45-1:35 **Industry Partnership Collaboration Meetings**


### **Workforce Development Partners Meeting (*Mansfield Meeting Room*)**

Industry partners will consider two key strategies identified in “Building the Innovations of Tomorrow” as opportunities to improve the development of the life science workforce. Participants will be asked to provide feedback on those strategies for the development of future initiatives.

- **Guest Speaker: Baley Reeves, Ph.D.**, Interim Director, National Center for Therapeutics Manufacturing
- **Guest Speaker: Harry Benson**, Director Human Performance Services, CAI
- **Facilitator: Linnea Fletcher, Ph.D.**, Biotechnology Department Chair, Austin Community College and Director, InnovATEBIO National Biotechnology Education Center

### **Economic Development Partners Meeting (*Bridge Ballroom*)**

Industry partners will learn how economic development organizations can partner to more effectively market Texas as a key state for life science and biotech companies. The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board will present their strategic plan for enhancing technology transfer at academic institutions. Participants will be asked to provide feedback on strategies for the development of future initiatives.

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- **Guest Speaker: Aaron Demerson**, President and CEO, Texas Economic Development Corporation
  - **Guest Speaker: Matt Parson**, Assistant Commissioner for Workforce Strategy, Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board
  - **Facilitator: Victoria Ford, MPA**, President and CEO, Texas Healthcare & Bioscience Institute
- 

1:35-2:15      **Break**

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2:15-3:05      **Preparing for the Future - Industry Forecast**

To invest \$2.5 billion into a product that won't make it to the market for 10-12 years, each life science and biotech company must be something of a fortune teller. This panel of industry experts will provide knowledgeable insight and informed predictions as to the forces that will shape the market into the next decade and beyond.

**Speakers:**

- **Robert Coughlin**, Managing Director of Life Science and Healthcare, JLL
  - **Bob Lenich**, Process & Knowledge Management, Business Director, Emerson Automation Solutions
  - **Ferran Prat, Ph.D., J.D.**, Senior Vice President of Research Administration and Industry Relations, MD Anderson Cancer Center
  - **Stan Watowich, Ph.D.**, Professor, UT Medical Branch at Galveston; Founder & CEO, Ridgeline Therapeutics; Executive Director, Gulf Coast Consortium Research Evaluation and Commercialization Hub
  - **Moderator: Victoria Ford, MPA**, President and CEO, Texas Healthcare & Bioscience Institute
- 

3:10-4:00      **Fireside Chat - How Texas is Working to Improve the Workforce and Technology Transfer**

**Speakers:**

- **Commissioner Harrison Keller, Ph.D.**, Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board
- **Commissioner Joe Esparza**, Texas Workforce Commission
- **Moderator: Eric Danielson, AICP**, Managing Director, Real Estate Development, NexPoint

# SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

**4:05-4:40**      **Closing Keynote - The State of Economic Development in Texas**


- **Adriana Cruz**, Executive Director, Economic Development and Tourism, Office of Governor Greg Abbott

**4:40-5:00**      **Closing Remarks**

- **Victoria Ford, MPA**, President and CEO, Texas Healthcare & Bioscience Institute

**5:00-6:00**      **Industry Reception, Networking and Expo**

## HIGHPOINT

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11 Million SF  
Life Science  
Campus



\$1 Billion Worth of  
Infrastructure  
in Place



840K SF  
Lab Space



Onsite Central  
Utility Plant



Located in Austin's  
Tech Corridor



Renovated  
in 2023

# The World's Most Comprehensive Life Science Ecosystem

## TMC | VENTURE FUND

**TMC Venture Fund (TMCVF)** is the venture capital arm of Texas Medical Center. TMCVF is a \$50M evergreen venture fund that invests in early-stage innovation with a Houston nexus. With over 20 portfolio companies, and multiple successful exits, TMCVF invests across digital, med device, and therapeutics. TMCVF partners with extraordinary entrepreneurs who are shaping the future of health.

### TMC | HELIX PARK

The best minds in medicine and commerce collaboratively advancing translational research

### TMC | INNOVATION FACTORY

Entrepreneurs and early-stage start-ups pushing the limits of discovery

### TMC | MEDICAL CAMPUS

60+ co-located institutions providing world-renowned patient care and research

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# TEXAS LIFE SCIENCES SUMMIT

## Exhibiting Companies



AUSTIN COMMUNITY COLLEGE  
**BIOSCIENCE  
INCUBATOR**



**AUSTINPX™**  
PHARMACEUTICS / MANUFACTURING

**avantor™**

**Bio Business Solutions™**

**biolabs**  
PEGASUS PARK



**Ceutical  
Labs**  
cGMP Compliance Specialists



CANCER PREVENTION & RESEARCH  
INSTITUTE OF TEXAS

**DPR®**  
CONSTRUCTION

**EMERSON**

**Gulf Coast Consortia  
REACH**  
Research Evaluation and Commercialization Hub

**NEXPOINT**  
TEXAS  
Research  
Quarter

**PEGASUS  
PARK**

**SCORPIUS**  
BIOMANUFACTURING

**SB Sino Biological**

**TMC** | INNOVATION

TEXAS★STATE  
UNIVERSITY

**XYZ**  
LABORATORY



# Biologics Manufacturing In The Lone Star State



Mammalian | Microbial | Analytical

# SPEAKERS PANELISTS & Moderators

(In alphabetical order)

## **HARRY BENSON**

**Director Human Performance Services, CAI**



Harry Benson serves as the Director Human Performance Services at CAI, leading a team of experienced professionals in developing and executing programs, processes, and tools with our clients to standardize and improve the performance of their people. A former nuclear-trained submarine officer and Master Training Specialist, he is an expert in learning solutions design and delivery with over 25 years of experience in applying current methods for organizational effectiveness and learning within highly technical environments. His methods have led to major skill improvement, driving results-based performance for the U.S. Nuclear Navy and companies ranging from small to Fortune 500. Mr. Benson has a Bachelor's degree from the U.S. Naval Academy, and a Master's in International Business from Wright State University. He is a specialist in organizational culture and structure, human performance, adult learning, training program development, and data center infrastructure design and operations.

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## **ROBERT COUGHLIN**

**Managing Director of Life Science and Healthcare, JLL**



Robert Coughlin is a Managing Director at JLL and is the New England's Life Science Practice Group lead. He specializes in the representation of lab, GMP manufacturing and technology space. Robert delivers creative solutions that align real estate strategies with scientific business objectives. Robert most recently operated as the President & CEO of the Massachusetts Biotechnology Council, where his mission was to advance Massachusetts's leadership in the life sciences to grow the industry.

Robert has spent his career in both the public and private sectors. Before joining MassBio, he served as the Undersecretary of Economic Development within Governor Deval Patrick's administration, where he prioritized both healthcare and economic development issues and was a strong advocate for the life sciences industry in Massachusetts. Prior to that, he was elected as State Representative to the 11th Norfolk district for three terms. Robert has also held senior executive positions in the environmental services, capital management and venture capital industries.

Robert is a graduate of the Massachusetts Maritime Academy where he majored in Marine Engineering and served as an officer in the United States Naval Reserve.

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## **ADRIANA CRUZ**

**Executive Director, Texas Economic Development & Tourism,  
Office of Governor Greg Abbott**



Adriana Cruz was appointed to lead the Governor's Office of Texas Economic Development & Tourism in October 2019. As Executive Director, Cruz provides leadership to Business and Community Development, Economic Development Finance, Texas Tourism, Texas Workforce Investment Council, Texas Music Office, and the Texas Film Commission. Cruz has more than 20 years of leadership experience in economic development, marketing, and international business. Prior to her appointment to lead the Texas Economic Development and Tourism Office, Cruz was President of the Greater San Marcos Partnership, the regional economic development organization established to encourage and nurture economic growth in San Marcos, and Hays and Caldwell Counties. Previously, Cruz was the Vice President of Global Corporate Recruitment for the Austin Chamber of Commerce.

In April 2020, Cruz was appointed by Governor Greg Abbott to the Strike Force to Open Texas, a team of nationally

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recognized private and public leaders to advise the Governor on safely and strategically reopening the state of Texas. In January 2020, Governor Greg Abbott appointed Cruz to the Advisory Council on Cultural Affairs and named her vice chair of the council. In 2021, the Governor appointed Cruz to the Texas Freight Advisory Committee. She also serves on the Texas Economic Development Council and the Texas Workforce Investment Council. In addition, from 2016 to 2019, she served on the Texas Economic Incentives Oversight Board, to review the efficiency of Texas' incentive programs.

In 2016, she won the Austin Business Journal's Profiles in Power: Central Texas Women of Influence Award. Cruz holds a B.B.A. in Marketing from the University of Texas at Austin, has been married for 34 years to her husband Rik, and has three grown children, and one grandson, living in the Austin area.



## **ERIC DANIELSON, AICP**

**Managing Director, Real Estate Development, NexPoint**



Eric Danielson is managing director, real estate development at NexPoint, a multibillion-dollar real estate and investment firm based in Dallas. At NexPoint, Eric is responsible for the firm's real estate development activities, including the Texas Research Quarter project, an integrated life sciences campus planned at the former EDS headquarters in Plano.

For the entirety of his career, Eric has been part of the real estate development industry, specifically focused on the life sciences. He's worked with a range of organizations committed to scientific discovery and lifesaving cures, including higher education research institutions, human health drug makers, federal research agencies, animal health product manufacturers, clinical research organizations, and health care providers.

Eric's background in the real estate development process started when he ran the economic development program for the City of Lenexa, Kansas. During that time, he was responsible for the growth of over \$400M in capital investment and the creation of over 2,000 jobs. He also contributed to the legislation of the Kansas Economic Growth act, which created the Kansas Bioscience Authority and subsequent inducements for the biosciences.

As a certified planner, Eric has worked with architectural, engineering, and construction companies helping create the built environment for the life science industry. From laboratory planning to master planning for regulated good manufacturing practices (GMP) facilities, he has helped

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deliver award-winning projects for a range of clients operating across the industry.

Eric and his wife Allison are keeping up with their very active three children. He's actively involved in their extracurriculars and supports several community organizations with his time. When not working or with his family you can find him courtside in Allen Fieldhouse as the Public Address Announcer for the University of Kansas men's basketball program.

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## **AARON DEMERSON**

**President and CEO, Texas Economic Development Corporation**



Aaron Demerson currently serves at the President and CEO of the Texas Economic Development Corporation (TxEDC). TxEDC is an independently funded and operated 501 (c) (3) organization that strategically partners and markets Texas both domestically and internationally as a premier business destination for companies looking to locate, relocate and/or expand their existing business footprint.

Previously, Demerson served as the Commissioner Representing Employers for the Texas Workforce Commission. In this role, Demerson advocated for over 660,000 Texas employers and over 3 million small businesses. Prior to his appointment he led activities as the Director of the Office of Employer Initiatives at the Texas Workforce Commission.

Prior to employment at the Texas Workforce Commission, he served as a Senior Advisor to then Governor Rick Perry and Executive Director of the Economic Development & Tourism Division in the Governor's Office, leading a team that marketed the State of Texas as a premier destination for both business and travel. He has also served as the Director of Business Development, the Director of Administration, and managed the Finance Division for the Texas Economic Development Agency.

He is a graduate of Texas A&M University-Kingsville, Leadership Austin and is proud to have participated in both the Army War College and National Training Center civilian programs.

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Better solutions.

Better focus.



Fueling  
the Texas Life  
Sciences Workforce

TEXAS STATE  
TRANSLATIONAL HEALTH  
RESEARCH CENTER

Texas State University provides a skilled workforce for the health and life sciences ecosystem in Texas. Our university research centers in San Marcos and Round Rock support innovative translational health research and tech commercialization projects pursued in conjunction with industry partners.



CANCER PREVENTION & RESEARCH  
INSTITUTE OF TEXAS

# Product Development Research

## Translating Cancer Science To Treatments

Developing new cancer drugs and devices is a multibillion-dollar, decades-long process. The Product Development Research Program at CPRIT accelerates this development by funding Texas-based startup companies in the crucial, early stages of work needed to bring life-saving drugs and technologies to market. Through the Product Development Program, CPRIT provides vital funding to these companies at a step in the process where private funding is normally not available--the so called "valley of death." The result is new, innovative treatments to fight cancer, developed right here in Texas.

### LIFE SCIENCE IMPACT

#### Product Development Awards

74 awards since 2010  
\$694 million committed

#### Follow-on Funding after CPRIT

\$6.6 billion

#### CPRIT-funded Texas companies

62 (44 in preclinical or clinical stage)

#### CPRIT-funded relocations

18 (9 international)

#### CPRIT-Funded Jobs in Texas

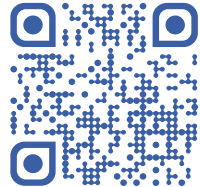
1620+ employees

#### Completed IPO or M&A

18 companies

View current or closed CPRIT Product Development Research Request for Applications (RFAs) online

CPRIT is a \$6 billion Texas effort to fight cancer. Learn more about our Academic Research and Prevention Programs on our website.



[cprit.texas.gov](http://cprit.texas.gov)

be sure to visit

## Texas Resource Guide

[texasresourceguide.org](http://texasresourceguide.org)

A free, online directory of resources for life science companies and organizations working in Texas or interested in relocating to Texas.

Multiple Categories ★ Free ★ Updated

## **KRISTEN PAULING DOYLE**

**Deputy Executive Officer and General Counsel, Cancer Prevention & Research Institute of Texas**

Kristen Pauling Doyle serves as Deputy Executive Officer and General Counsel for the Cancer Prevention & Research Institute of Texas (CPRIT). CPRIT is a \$6 billion cancer research fund, which was created by a statewide vote in 2007 and reauthorized in 2019. To date, the agency has awarded more than \$3.54 billion in grants to Texas research institutions and organizations. CPRIT has also recruited 306 distinguished researchers to Texas, supported the establishment, expansion, or relocation of 60+ early-stage biotech companies throughout the state, and provided 9.5 million prevention services reaching all 254 Texas counties.

Prior to joining CPRIT in 2009, Ms. Doyle was a partner at an Austin-based law firm practicing energy law. She received a B.S. in Public Policy from Indiana University and her J.D. and M.S. in Technology Commercialization from The University of Texas at Austin. Ms. Doyle is the president of the board of directors for Wonders & Worries, a Texas-based non-profit, and previously served as vice president of the board of directors for the Central Texas Chapter for the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society.

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## **JOE ESPARZA**

**Commissioner Representing Employers, Texas Workforce Commission**



Joe Esparza currently serves as the Commissioner Representing Employers for the Texas Workforce Commission. Governor Abbott appointed him to the three-member commission on November 7, 2023. In his role, Commissioner Esparza serves as an advocate for over 660,000 Texas employers and over 3 million small businesses. He and his team serve as a key resource for all Texas employers to help businesses grow and thrive in Texas.

Prior to his appointment, Commissioner Esparza was sworn in as Texas Deputy Secretary of State on December 14, 2018. In addition, Esparza previously served as a Senior Appointments Manager in the office of the Governor, overseeing numerous gubernatorial appointments during Governor Abbott's first term.

A graduate of Texas Tech University, Esparza earned a Bachelor of Science in Agricultural Communications. Esparza received an Honorable Discharge from the United States Marine Corps and is a Veteran of the Global War on Terrorism, having served in Iraq.

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## **GABBY EVERETT, Ph.D.**

**Director of Business Operations & Strategy,  
Site Head for BioLabs Pegasus Park**



Gabby Everett is the Director of Business Operations & Strategy and Site Head for BioLabs Pegasus Park, the premier network of shared lab and office facilities located in key innovation clusters. As Director, she is responsible for recruiting member companies, fostering relationships, and building the biotech community in North Texas. Prior to BioLabs, Gabby was the Lead Scientist in the Biotech group at NCH Corporation. There she led the product development team for bioaugmentation and probiotic products, from ideation to commercialization. She holds 12 US patents and has another 8 patents pending. Gabby holds a Ph.D. in Biochemistry from Texas A&M University where she was author on nearly 50 peer-reviewed research publications. She was featured as one of the Future 50 Standout Innovators of Dallas/Fort Worth by Dallas Innovates and was recently listed as a 2024 Dallas 500 honoree by DCEO.

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## **LINNEA FLETCHER, Ph.D.**

**Biotechnology Department Chair, Austin Community College,  
Director, InnovATEBIO National Biotechnology Education Center**



Dr. Linnea Fletcher enjoys all forms of exercise but especially biking, hiking, and swimming. Her favorite pastimes are family events in the outdoors and travel. She received her Ph.D. in microbiology from the University of Texas at Austin, and did two postdocs one at the Southwestern Medical Center and another in the Biochemistry Department at the University of Texas. She joined Austin Community College as a Department Chair in Biology and started the Biotechnology Program in 1999. At the same time, she joined the first NSF Funded National Biotechnology Education Center, Bio-Link, and received her first NSF funded ATE grant to start Biotechnology high school programs in Texas. She worked as an NSF Program Officer from 2008 to 2010 and was involved in setting up the first Vision and Change Meeting. In 2015, she received an Emerging Technology Fund Grant to build a Bioscience Incubator at ACC and several Wagner Peyser Grants to equip it. Today the incubator is full of start-up companies and students interning or working for these companies. She was the PI of the AC2 Bio-Link Regional Center and is now the PI of InnovATEBIO, the NSF funded National Biotechnology Center. Combining economic development with educational opportunities is her passion.

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## **VICTORIA FORD, MPA**

**President and CEO, Texas Healthcare & Bioscience Institute**



Victoria Ford has over 29 years of Texas public policy and administration experience. In her most recent role as Chief Policy and Regulatory Officer at the Texas Health and Human Services Commission, Ford managed over 2,200 employees across five divisions which were responsible for regulating health care facilities, streamlining business processes and programs, enhancing data and analytics, and more. During her tenure at the agency, she also held the Acting Chief Operating Officer role twice, providing operational support to more than 38,000 employees.

She spent nearly 12 years as a Government Affairs advisor for K&L Gates a worldwide law firm helping fortune 500 corporations in the health care and other economic sectors, small businesses and non-profit organizations in navigating the executive and legislative branches in Texas.

In addition, Victoria served in other key roles in the health and human services policy arena world. During her tenure in the office of Governor Rick Perry, Ford held various roles related to health and human services policy including Senior Advisor. She also worked on other policy areas as Deputy Legislative director including tax policy and economic development issues. Ford also worked as Legislative Director for members in both the Texas House of Representatives and Texas State Senate.

Ford holds a bachelor's degree in political science from UT San Antonio and a Master of Public Administration. She has held several leadership and advisory roles at esteemed organizations such as the Child Advocacy Centers Association of Texas and the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society.

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## **DAN HARGROVE, JD, LLM**

**Chief Strategy Officer, Texas BioTech Ventures**



Dan Hargrove, JD, LLM, Telperian Investor, Board of Director Member, and Chief Strategy Officer, is a biotech entrepreneur, investor, and lawyer. Mr. Hargrove was co-founder and past president of Cancer Insight, LLC (now LumaBridge), which is a full-service clinical Contract Research Organization that develops immunotherapeutics. Mr. Hargrove led Cancer Insight from formation (2012) to acquisition (2021) by the private equity firm Summit Partners. Mr. Hargrove is the co-founder of PalloV, LLC, a clinical-stage drug company developing novel immunotherapeutics. Mr. Hargrove is the former CEO of Emtora Biosciences where he led the

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company's efforts to translate its lead drug candidate from the bench to its first-in-human clinical trial; earned a multimillion dollar investment from CPRIT, which was matched by private investors; obtained orphan drug designation from FDA for its lead drug candidate; and commenced a phase II study in the rare disease of familial adenomatous polyposis (ongoing). Mr. Hargrove was also the initial investor of Slope.io, Inc., and serves on Slope's Board of Directors and Business Advisory Board.

Mr. Hargrove is a former active-duty Army officer, having served with the 10th Mountain Division (Light Infantry) and deployed to the Middle East with the 82nd Airborne Division. As a reservist, Mr. Hargrove served as a Professor of Law at the U.S. Army JAG School from 2004 to 2012 and reserve staff judge advocate (general counsel) of two major Air Force commands. He retired from the Reserve in 2018 with the rank of Lieutenant Colonel. Mr. Hargrove serves on CPRIT's Product Development Advisory Committee and the External Advisory Committee for the Texas Medical Center – Accelerator for Cancer Therapeutics. He and his wife, Susie Hargrove, JD, are biotech investors through their firm, Texas BioTech Ventures, LLC.

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## **HARRISON KELLER, Ph.D.**

**Commissioner of Higher Education, Chief Executive Officer,  
Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board**



Harrison Keller is Commissioner of Higher Education for the State of Texas and chief executive officer for the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board. Dr. Keller is a sixth-generation Texan with nearly twenty-five years of experience in state budget and policy, university administration, fundraising, and building coalitions among higher education institutions, school districts, and policymakers.

At the Coordinating Board, Dr. Keller has worked with higher education leaders, employers, and policymakers to develop and advance the state's strategic plan for higher education, Building a Talent Strong Texas. Dr. Keller has worked with the Governor, legislators, and higher education leaders to accelerate innovation and increase support for financial aid, transfer, workforce education, and research and development. He is a recognized innovator in programs to improve college readiness and student success, especially for low-income and first-generation students.

Dr. Keller has taught at Georgetown University, St. Edward's University, and the University of Texas at Austin. He holds a

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bachelor's degree from the University of Notre Dame and an M.A. and Ph.D. in philosophy from Georgetown University. From 2005 to 2015, he served as an intelligence officer in the United States Navy Reserve. He and his wife live in Austin with their three children.

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## **BOB LENICH**

**Process and Knowledge Management, Business Director,  
Emerson Automation Solutions**



Bob Lenich is a life-long learner who stays engaged in new technology and organizational trends in order to adapt them to solving operating issues across the process industries. He works with a wide variety of organizations to identify operational problems, evaluate how to make improvements, and then justify and sell the approach. Bob loves seeing the successful deployment of a solution and then sharing the benefits so that others can take advantage of the approach. Bob gets special gratification from seeing how those improvements help areas like Life Science manufacturing improve people's lives. Bob currently is responsible for implementing Emerson's strategy for technology transfer and pipeline acceleration in the Life Science industry globally. He then collaboratively works across the various business units in Emerson to implement the strategy and build the business.

He has a BS in Chemical Engineering from the Rose-Hulman Institute of Technology, and an MBA from the University of Texas at Austin. He has over 40 years in the automation industry, mostly in Life Sciences.

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## **KIRK MACOLINI**

**Founder, President and Principal Consultant, IntelliSpark**

Kirk Macolini is the Founder, President and Principal Consultant of IntelliSpark. Kirk has over 15 years of experience with the SBIR and STTR programs and has developed proposals that have resulted in ~400 funded projects from agencies including all SBIR granting federal agencies. His work assisting start-ups in competing for SBIR/STTR funding has been featured in the journal Nature. Many of his clients' projects are based on university generated technologies – including technologies from well-respected research institutions such as Cornell University, Columbia University, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, University of California Berkeley, and the University of Virginia. He has held technical,

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management, and business roles in small software and biotech firms. Mr. Macolini earned a Masters of Science and Bachelors of Science at the University of Massachusetts at Amherst. He has eight years of military experience in military intelligence and combat engineering roles. An entrepreneur at heart, Mr. Macolini also founded Centurion Technology to help small innovative firms compete effectively against larger SBIR mills. He is dedicated to giving each client the personal attention required to make the client successful.

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## **MARCUS NELSON**

**Vice President of Business Analytics, Texas Medical Center**



Marcus Nelson is the Vice President of Business Analytics at Texas Medical Center (TMC). In this role, he oversees all diligence for the TMC Venture Fund and leads strategic analyses for top initiatives. Marcus joined the Texas Medical Center in 2022. Marcus previously served as the Director of Strategy and Business Operations at a logistics and technology startup in Houston (cart.com), where he co-lead sourcing through the close of four M&A transactions. Prior to the startup, Marcus worked as a management consultant at McKinsey & Company. His work spanned across healthcare and advanced industries, with a focus on strategy and analytics. Marcus started his career as a field engineer at Schlumberger, working on drilling rigs in the Gulf of Mexico.

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## **MATT PARSON**

**Assistant Commissioner for Workforce Strategy,  
Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board**



Matt Parson is a distinguished professional with a wealth of experience in the field of higher education and currently serves as the Assistant Commissioner for Workforce Strategy at the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board. Matt is dedicated to fostering collaborative research and development initiatives within the higher education landscape to spur the development of innovative startups and companies, helmed by pioneering researchers, to driving economic growth across the state.

Prior to his current position, Matt served as Assistant Vice Chancellor for Government Relations at The Texas A&M University System. In this role, he focused on institutional appropriations and worked diligently to strengthen academic and student affairs.

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## **BRADLEY PHELAN, MBA**

**Assistant Vice President, Technology Commercialization and Business Development, Director of Blackstone LaunchPad, UT Southwestern Medical Center**



Bradley Phelan focuses on engaging with UTSW students and faculty internally and entrepreneurs, investors and commercialization partners externally to support the advancement of research toward commercial application to positively impact patient lives. A graduate of Baylor University (BBA in Finance & Real Estate) and The University of Arkansas (MBA in Entrepreneurship); Brad holds a Series 65 license and previously worked for JP Morgan Chase, on Capitol Hill in Washington DC and more recently launched three companies and served as a fractional COO for entrepreneurs and high-net-worth individuals prior to joining UTSW.

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## **FERRAN PRAT, Ph.D., J.D.**

**Senior Vice President of Research Administration and Industry Relations, MD Anderson Cancer Center**



Ferran Prat, Ph.D., J.D., is Senior Vice President of Research Administration and Industry Relations at MD Anderson Cancer Center. Prat helps the faculty and researchers at MD Anderson develop collaborative opportunities with pharmaceutical, biotech, diagnostics, imaging, laboratory medicine and other industry partners. Prior to joining MD Anderson, Ferran held a number of industry and academic positions, including vice president, oncology and women's health at Alere Inc. vice president for licensing at Biosite Inc., management consultant at McKinsey & Co., engineer at Chromogenia-Units and researcher at the University of California – Los Angeles. Prat has a Ph.D. in organic chemistry from the University of California – Los Angeles and a J.D. from the University of San Diego School of Law.

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## **BALEY REEVES, Ph.D.**

**Interim Director, National Center for Therapeutics Manufacturing**



Baley Reeves was appointed interim director of the National Center for Therapeutics Manufacturing (NCTM) in 2023 and currently leads NCTM's mRNA project initiatives and downstream processing operations. She has over 17 years of experience in downstream processing and over 13 years of experience in biomanufacturing workforce development, and has expertise in the recovery and purification of recombinant proteins, vaccines, and gene therapy products, as well as experience in cGMP manufacturing and process development. Prior to joining NCTM, Baley was a senior scientist and fellow at the Biomanufacturing Training and Education Center (BTEC), where she developed and taught courses for biotech industry leaders, regulatory agencies, and the WHO. She has also worked on numerous vaccine-related projects, including a global survey of the vaccine manufacturing landscape with the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. Baley holds a Ph.D. in chemical engineering from Princeton University, where she was a National Science Foundation Graduate Fellow. She has authored articles on protein purification in *Trends in Biotechnology*, *Protein Science*, *Protein Expression and Purification*, and *Microbial Cell Factories*, as well as articles on biomanufacturing training and education published in *Chemical Engineering Education*.

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## **OMID VEISEH, Ph.D.**

**Associate Professor and CPRIT Scholar in Cancer Research, Rice University**



Dr. Omid Veiseh, Ph.D., is an Associate Professor and CPRIT Scholar in Cancer Research in the Department of Bioengineering at Rice University. He leads an interdisciplinary translational research program to engineer and commercialize next-generation cell-based therapeutics for various human diseases. His team leverages the latest techniques in synthetic biology, immunoengineering, and materials science to develop innovative cell-based platforms for real-time and feedback-regulated production of biologics. Over the course of his career, he has authored or co-authored more than 75 peer-reviewed publications, including those in *Nature*, *Nature Biotechnology*, *Nature Materials*, *Nature Medicine*, and *Nature Biomedical Engineering*, and is an inventor on more than 40 pending or awarded patents. He is also a serial entrepreneur who has co-founded Sigilon Therapeutics (Nasdaq: SGTX), Avenge Bio, Sentinel Bio, and Curada Bio. These companies collectively have attracted ~

*(cont. pg 27)*

*(cont. from pg. 26)*

\$500M in private and public investment capital. In September of 2023, he was named the Director of Rice University's Biotech Launch Pad, a new initiative with a mission to accelerate the translation of Rice University discoveries and technologies into clinical practice to provide rapid patient access to leading-edge therapeutic products.

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## **STANLEY WATOWICH, Ph.D.**

**Professor, UT Medical Branch at Galveston; Founder and CEO, Ridgeline Therapeutics; Executive Director, Gulf Coast Consortium Research Evaluation and Commercialization Hub**



Dr. Stanley Watowich is Professor of Biochemistry and Molecular Biology at the University of Texas Medical Branch. He serves as Executive Director for the Gulf Coast Consortium Research Evaluation and Commercialization Hub, one of five NIH-funded centers tasked with helping researchers more rapidly bring their biomedical discoveries to patients. He is also the Founder and CEO of Ridgeline Therapeutics, a Houston-based biotechnology company developing transformative drugs to reverse age-linked muscle weakness and obesity. He is an accomplished entrepreneur, inventor, educator, researcher, and developer of world-class innovative resources, including the DrugDiscovery@TACC supercomputer-based drug screening portal. Dr. Watowich graduated from Carleton College, received his Ph.D. in Physical Chemistry from the University of Chicago, and was a research fellow at Harvard University before migrating to Texas.

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