

High Tech West Judge Bios – 2026

DAY 1 – 2/25/26

Corbin Andersen

Engineering Manager
Stryker Neurovascular

Corbin Andersen is an engineering leader with extensive experience driving operational excellence and leading high-performing teams. In his current role as an Engineering Manager at Stryker, he leads business transformation efforts focused on delivering automation solutions and driving systemic process improvements. Prior to joining Stryker, Corbin spent five years at Sandia National Laboratories supporting the United States' nuclear deterrence mission. He managed multiple production operations, led cross-functional engineering teams, and guided continuous improvement activities. Earlier in his career, he gained deep technical expertise as a chemical engineer and analytical supervisor, managing supply chains, developing material testing plans, leading Kaizen initiatives, and overseeing laboratory operations. Corbin holds a Master of Science in Petroleum Engineering from Texas A&M University and a Bachelor of Science in Physics from the University of Utah, and he brings over a decade of experience in leadership, engineering, and regulated manufacturing environments.

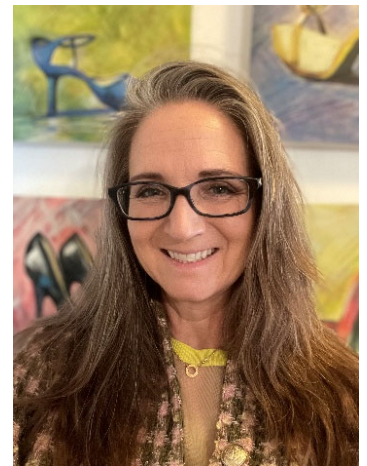


Liz Barrows

Senior Associate, Federal Medical R&D Funding Consultant
McAllister & Quinn

Elizabeth Barrows provides federal funding, project management and regulatory support for her clients, which include small and large businesses, venture firms, and academic organizations. She holds a master's degree in biomedical engineering, with experience in medical device and biologic product development for in vitro diagnostics, blood products and analgesics.

She has extensive experience as a federal funding consultant, including interaction with the Legislative and Executive branches of the US Government – particularly the Department of Defense and Health and Human Services, regulated medical product project management, government strategy, development of non-dilutional funding opportunities and government partnering. Her clients have secured in excess of \$100M over the course of her 10+ year career. Elizabeth's in depth knowledge of the Department of Defense funding opportunities and needs has a basis in experience; where she managed pharmaceutical research and development projects in blood products, resuscitation fluids and analgesic drugs for the US Army from 2004-2009. She has also worked with NASA and private industry on the development of biomedical sensors, robotics, in vitro diagnostics, and blood products. Elizabeth has held a Project Management Professional (PMP) certification and is certified under the Defense Acquisition Workforce Improvement Act training scale at Level 3 in Science and Technology Management and Level 2 in Program Management. Working for Industry, Elizabeth managed development and FDA clearance of a BARDA funded respiratory sample collection device and pre-clinical studies for an Army-funded platelet derived hemostatic agent and supported the blood banking community with regulatory affairs and FDA interaction.



Kelvyn Cullimore

President & CEO

BioUtah

Kelvyn H. Cullimore Jr. was named President and CEO of BioUtah, the state trade association for life science companies in Utah, in October 2018.

Mr. Cullimore is a member of the board or on the advisory board for the World Trade Center Utah, Center for Medical Innovation at the University of Utah, BYU's Life Sciences Leadership Council, College of Science, Engineering and Technology at Utah Tech University.

From 1992 to 2018 Mr. Cullimore was the President & CEO of Dynatronics Corporation, a leading manufacturer of physical therapy devices and products. Dynatronics is a publicly traded company originally founded by Mr. Cullimore and his father in 1979.

Mr. Cullimore was elected the first Mayor of Cottonwood Heights, UT in November 2004 and served in that capacity until January 2018.

He graduated cum laude from Brigham Young University in 1980 with a degree in Financial and Estate Planning.



Chris Hlubb

CEO

Agrilogics Group, Inc.

Christopher Hlubb is the Founder and CEO of Agrilogics Group, Inc., which develops innate immune layered defense solutions for pathogen agnostic threats using its patented active molecule isolation technology. He is also a Board Member and Chair of the Development Committee for the Medical Technology Enterprise Consortium (MTEC), a DoD public-private partnership that promotes the development of emerging medical technologies and a member of the Programmatic Panel of the Congressionally Directed Medical Research Program (CDMRP).

Chris began his career at Johns Hopkins Hospital in the field of biochemical neurogenetics where he contributed to novel patient-direct treatments for childhood metabolic diseases and neurophysiologic medical devices.

For the last 25 years, Chris has worked as an executive in a myriad of private industries driving the development of more than 80 products, scaling global manufacturing, overseeing R&D, and managing federal advocacy and compliance across new product categories. This work has frequently been in collaboration with academia and federal agencies including the FDA, USDA, USFW and numerous partnerships across the U.S. Military paradigm.

To date, Chris has supported over \$200mm in private and federal investment in new technologies through his public advocacy, advisory and mentorship roles with early-stage companies. His methods and R&D techniques have led to ultra-rapid product development and commercialization successes for his own companies, and those he mentors.



Larissa May

Program Manager
ARPA-H

Dr. Larissa May joined ARPA-H in October 2025 from the University of California Davis. As a board-certified emergency physician, her interests lie in patient safety, rapid diagnostic tests, and infection prevention. In addition to her clinical work, May has advised life science companies and accelerators on strategy, clinical trial development, and post-market implementation through the UC Davis Center for Diagnostic Innovation and Berkeley SkyDeck. She has led public health screening campaigns, directed antibiotic stewardship and infection prevention programs, and led working groups on a variety of translational topics.

May has over 100 peer-reviewed publications, including several book chapters. She has consulted for the federal government, California state Department of Health, and Yolo County public health. She received her medical degree from and completed residency at George Washington University and received an MBA in Healthcare Administration from the University of Colorado Denver.

**Daniel McGarrah**

Owner/Operator
Armory Consortium LLC

Dan McGarrah is a recent Senior Enlisted Medical Advisor in Special Operations with over 23 years of experience in bridging civilian and military medical operations. He is currently working locally and internationally as a Senior Medical Instructor/ Coordinator, Medical Operations Consultant, or Strategic Planning Specialist in the healthcare, acquisitions, or business sectors. Recent roles involve collaborating with high-performing teams to develop and implement comprehensive medical strategies that enhance operational readiness, optimize resource allocation, improve trauma response capabilities, and foster both local and international medical collaboration. Expertise in emergency management, strategic planning, and policy development is supported by a Masters in International Strategic Studies and ongoing studies for a Doctorate in Public Health.

**Luke Neff**

Associate Professor, Department of Surgery; Medical Director, Brenner Trauma Program

Wake Forest University School of Medicine / Brenner Children's Hospital
Lucas Neff, MD, FACS is an Associate Professor in the Department of Surgery with a secondary appointment in the Department of Pediatrics. He currently serves as the Medical Director for the Brenner Trauma Program. Dr. Neff is a practicing pediatric surgeon with clinical expertise in trauma, resuscitation, and the management of complex surgical conditions. Beyond his clinical practice, Dr. Neff has deep experience in medical device development and technology, particularly in endovascular devices, endoscopy, and critical care automation. He is also actively involved in research regarding the history and impact of military trauma care contributions.



Kimberly Pope

Senior Associate

Command Strategies, LLC

Dr. Kimberly Boelte Pope joined Command Strategies as a Senior Associate in October 2025. She is an accomplished biomedical scientist and program manager with extensive experience leading collaborative research initiatives focused on advancing medical solutions. She recently served as a Research Program Manager at the Defense Health Agency, where she oversaw complex engineering and science projects, managed a \$35 million annual research portfolio, and directed multidisciplinary teams to address critical capability gaps in military medicine. Dr. Pope is recognized for her strategic vision, effective leadership, and ability to coordinate high-impact programs across government, academia, and industry partners.

Dr. Pope holds a Ph.D. from Vanderbilt University and a B.S. in Biology from Mary Washington College, graduating summa cum laude with honors. Her career spans roles at the National Cancer Institute, Leidos, General Dynamics Information Technology, and the Congressionally Directed Medical Research Programs, where she contributed to biomedical research, grants management, and policy development. She is a certified acquisition professional with advanced training in science and technology management and has been recognized with honors such as the Civilian Service Achievement Medal. Dr. Pope is an active member of professional associations and is dedicated to mentoring, leadership development, and service within the scientific community.



Christopher Steele

Chief of Strategy

MTEC, Medical Technology Enterprise Consortium

Christopher Steele serves as the Chief of Strategy at the Medical Technology Enterprise Consortium (MTEC), where he leads strategic initiatives to advance biotech/medtech solutions that support dual-use (military & civilian) medical applications. In this role, Steele drives the non-profit organization's efforts to expand MTEC's program customer base, pursue & partner across federal opportunities, and strengthen MTEC's financial and reputational standing as the go-to "Other Transaction" mechanism for DoD medical product maturation and commercialization. His leadership ensures that MTEC remains at the forefront of medical innovation, while building a sustainable and diverse entity.

With over 34 years of service in the Department of Defense (in the US Army & US Navy), Steele held key leadership roles in R&D. He directed the Military Operational Medicine Research Program (MOMRP) for Army and Defense Health Agency funding and was a Program Officer at the Office of Naval Research. Additionally, he played a pivotal role in joint R&D funding and Navy/Marine Corps prioritization efforts at the Navy Bureau of Medicine and Surgery. His experience includes



overseeing +\$1Bn of R&D funding and hundreds of medical research projects (across 11 intramural DoD laboratories, several UARCs and FFRDCs, and many academic and commercial partners) aimed at improving the health, readiness, and performance of Servicemembers. He led numerous programs across topics that include environmental physiology, psychological health, musculoskeletal injuries, combat casualty care, radiation exposure, directed energy, rehabilitative medicine, performance nutrition, and circadian/sleep & performance optimization. Additionally, he led programmatic oversight of large DoD/VA partnership programs including the Consortium to Alleviate PTSD, the Military Suicide Research Consortium and the Millenium Cohort Program. A retired Navy Commander and circadian physiologist, Steele holds a Ph.D. from North Carolina State University.

Kevin Ward

Professor of Emergency Medicine and Biomedical Engineering/Executive Director of the Max Harry Weil Institute for Critical Care and Research and Innovation

University of Michigan

Dr. Ward is Professor of Emergency Medicine and Biomedical Engineering and the Executive Director of the Max Harry Weil Institute for Critical Care Research and Innovation at the University of Michigan.

Dr. Ward's passion is in creating programs which encourage true integration across the disciplines combined with entrepreneurship that accelerate discovery to true patient impact.

Dr. Ward is a Fellow of the National Academy of Inventors and the recipient of the University of Michigan's Distinguished Innovator and Commercialization award. He is also a Lieutenant Colonel in the U.S. Army Reserve Medical Corp with combat deployments to Afghanistan and Syria.



Jon White

Associate Chief of Staff, Research and Development,
VA Salt Lake City Health Care System

Senior Advisor, Information Technology and Data Governance,
VHA Office of Research and Development

P. Jon White MD is the Chief of Research and Development at the Veterans Affairs Salt Lake City Health Care System. He directs projects in informatics and causal inference and co-leads an Evidence Based Policy Center. Dr. White is also a Senior Advisor for Artificial Intelligence to the VA's Office of Research and Development and Professor of Medicine at the University of Utah conducting translational research funded by NIH, FDA, and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. He is also a board member of the Western Institute for Veteran's Research. Dr. White has an active clinical practice providing primary care to Veterans.



Previously Dr. White was the Acting Deputy Chief Research and Development Officer for Enterprise Protections, Regulatory, Outreach, and Systems for the Veterans Health Administration. He was also the Deputy National Coordinator for Health Information Technology in the US Department of Health and Human Services where he led national health technology programs and policies. He executed mission-critical activities including publication of federal regulations, congressional reports, and strategic

priorities. Dr. White was also Director of the Division of Health IT at the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ). There he funded hundreds of projects in 48 states on a variety of health technology applications and issues. Dr. White worked with the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services, the Food and Drug Administration, the Centers for Disease Control, the Drug Enforcement Administration, the National Institutes of Health, and key external stakeholders to implement health care initiatives.

Dr. White trained in family medicine at the University of Virginia and Lancaster General Hospital in Pennsylvania. He is a recipient of the national American Academy of Family Physicians Award for Excellence in Graduate Education.

Stephen Xenakis

Brigadier General (Ret), U.S. Army, Adjunct Professor
Uniformed Services University of Health Services

Stephen N. Xenakis, MD, Brigadier General (Ret), USA served 28 years in the United States Army and is a psychiatrist with an active clinical and consulting practice. He has been a senior adviser to the Department of Defense on the care and support to service members and their families. Dr. Xenakis has written widely on medical ethics, military medicine, and treatment of detainees and appears regularly on national radio and television. Dr. Xenakis is an Adjunct Professor at the Uniformed Services of Health Sciences of the military medical department and University of Maryland School of Medicine.



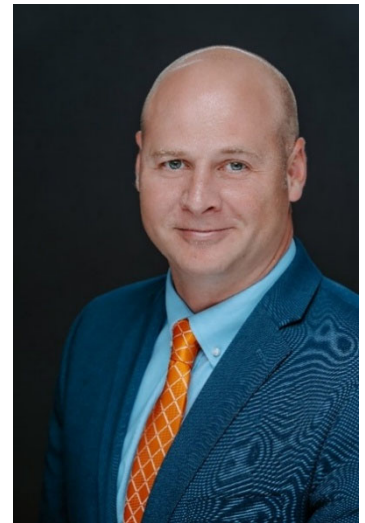
DAY 2 – 2/26/26

John S. Carpenter

Scientist

Los Alamos National Laboratory

John S. Carpenter is a manager and scientist within the manufacturing and metallurgy division at Los Alamos National Laboratory (LANL). Dr. Carpenter received his Ph.D. in Materials Science and Engineering from The Ohio State University in 2010 after performing his undergraduate studies at Virginia Tech. He has managed several programs at LANL including ones associated with severe plastic deformation, friction stir welding, metal spray, and additive manufacturing. Often his role is to enable advanced manufacturing concepts for weapon and nuclear energy applications through integrated experiments that employ novel processing techniques, advanced in situ diagnostics, ex situ characterization and small scale mechanical testing. Currently, he is working on projects related to dissimilar metal joining for nuclear energy through controlled compositional gradients and protective coatings for space applications. He has more than seventy-five journal publications and fifty invited technical talks to his credit. He is a 2021 recipient of the McKay-Helm Award from the American Welding Society as well as a three time recipient of a Defense Programs Award of Excellence from the NNSA.



James R. Case

Senior Manager, Systems Engineering & Integration
Idaho National Laboratory

James R. Case is an INCOSE-certified Expert Systems Engineering Professional with over 25 years of experience in complex, multidisciplinary engineering environments. He currently serves as the Senior Manager for Systems Engineering and Integration at the U.S. Department of Energy's Idaho National Laboratory (INL), where he leads cross-functional teams supporting initiatives in defense systems, remote/autonomous systems, and power grid testing and integration.

In addition to his technical leadership, James brings nearly three decades of service in Search and Rescue (SAR) operations. He has held multiple leadership roles with both Bonneville County Sheriff's Search and Rescue and Snake River Search, contributing to mission readiness, training, and emergency response coordination.

James holds a Bachelor of Science in Electrical Engineering from Idaho State University and a Master of Engineering in Engineering Management from the University of Idaho.

**JP Chretien**

Director, Big if True Science Accelerator (BiTS)
Renaissance Philanthropy

Jean-Paul (JP) Chretien is Director of Renaissance Philanthropy's Big if True Science Accelerator (BiTS), which trains visionary innovators to transform breakthrough concepts into actionable program designs. Previously, JP served 20 years on active duty in the US Navy. Most recently he was a program manager in DARPA's Biological Technologies Office, where he initiated and led complex multi-institution efforts to develop life-saving medical technologies. Before DARPA, JP headed the Department of Defense Pandemic Warning Team; was Senior Advisor for Biodefense in the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy; led the Innovation & Evaluation Team at the Armed Forces Health Surveillance Center; oversaw health protection for tens of thousands of US Marines and NATO personnel in Afghanistan; and coordinated international programs for the DoD-Global Emerging Infections Surveillance and Response System.

JP graduated from the US Naval Academy, where he was a Truman Scholar, and received his MD from the Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine, and PhD (Epidemiology) and MHS (Biostatistics) from the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health. He received the Skelton Award for Public Service from the Harry S. Truman Scholarship Foundation and the Rising Star Award from the American College of Preventive Medicine, was named one of 13 Innovators Shaping the Future.



Joe Freedman

Director

Red Cat Holdings

Joe Freedman is an experienced operator, founder, and board leader with a multi-decade record of building, scaling, and successfully exiting companies across executive search, title insurance, legal services, hospitality, and software-enabled services. In addition to his operating background, he has held board roles in fintech, proptech, financial services and the advanced drone and robotics industry. He currently serves as Lead Director of Red Cat Holdings, Inc. (Nasdaq: RCAT) and Chair of the Compensation Committee at Beeline Financial, Inc. (Nasdaq: BLNE).

Throughout his career, Mr. Freedman founded and led multiple companies to acquisitions by NYSE-listed acquirers, private equity firms, and strategic buyers. His ventures achieved more than a dozen Inc. 500/5000 recognitions, including a Top 100 national ranking, reflecting consistent performance in high-growth environments, complex integrations, turnarounds, divestitures, and disciplined operational expansion.

He holds a B.S. in Finance from Louisiana State University and a J.D. from Northwestern California School of Law. He is NACD Board Director Certified and has completed executive governance programs at Wharton (Boards That Lead) and MIT's Entrepreneurial Masters Program.

**General (R) Paul E. Funk**

Paul Funk Leadership Consulting, LLC

General (R) Paul E. Funk II is a distinguished, results-driven leader known for transforming large, complex, and human-centric organizations. Over a decades-long career, he has shaped performance, culture, and innovation across institutions serving more than 800,000 people. A globally recognized, combat-proven strategist, he led the largest military coalition in history—72 nations—while earning a reputation as a world-class speaker, motivator, and trusted advisor to senior leaders striving for mission-critical outcomes. A champion of organizational change and workforce development, General Funk has consistently fostered world-class teams built on strategic planning, talent integration, and a deep commitment to veterans and those who serve. Renowned for helping leaders unlock the potential of their people and systems, he brings unmatched expertise in leadership development, operational execution, and crisis management. His proven ability to drive innovation, cultivate future leaders, and enhance institutional readiness has made him a sought-after advisor for organizations navigating complex challenges.



Nick Holt

Economic Aviation Development Manager
Utah Division of Aeronautics

Nick Holt, CM, ACE, currently serves as the Economic Aviation Development Manager and Deputy Director for the Utah Division of Aeronautics. In this capacity, he leads the Airports Team and manages the Capital Improvement Plan, overseeing aircraft registration, emergency management, backcountry airstrips, and state grant programs.

With over 20 + years of experience in the aviation industry, Nick began his career as a flight instructor and aircraft owner. He spent the majority of his career managing Part 139 commercial service airports, including St. George Regional and Cedar City Regional Airports. As a successful entrepreneur, he is the founder and owner of American Fireline, an FAA-certified provider of temporary air traffic control services and wildland firefighting contract management. Nick is a strategic partner with AirNex, a tech company focused on launching a mobile app that allows the public to book private air travel with a focus on streamlining the process.



Nick is the former President of the Utah Airport Operators Association and has served on both the Local Emergency Planning and Economic Development Steering Committees. He holds a Bachelor's degree in Aviation from Utah Valley University, is pursuing an MBA, and maintains CM and ACE accreditations through the American Association of Airport Executives. His comprehensive expertise spans airport operations, aircraft rescue and firefighting (ARFF), security, finance, and economic development.

Joel Lash

Director of Material, Physical, and Chemical Sciences Center
Sandia National Laboratories

Dr. Lash joined Sandia's Pulsed Power Sciences Center in May 1996 to develop and field advanced plasma diagnostics for the Ion Beam Fusion Program and for Sandia's development of high-intensity radiographic x-ray sources. In 2000, Dr. Lash joined the Engineering Sciences Center and led both component and system level computational mechanics analysis. In 2013, Dr. Lash became Senior Manager of the Z Facility Research and Development Group responsible for operation and engineering of the Z Machine, the world's most powerful pulsed power facility. He was also responsible for Z diagnostic research, development and fielding. From 2017 to 2024, Dr. Lash led the Engineering Sciences Center which stewards a breadth of disciplines for Sandia including Thermal, Fluid, Aero, and Fire Sciences as well as Structural Dynamics, Shock Physics, and Solid Mechanics. Work in the center spanned the Research to Development to Application spectrum, with fundamental discovery and advanced diagnostics applied to highly integrated full scale physical and computational simulation of engineered systems subjected to extreme environments. He currently leads the Material, Physical, and Chemical Sciences Center which researches, develops, and applies innovative solutions to a breadth of national security challenges through leveraging our ever-expanding foundation of material discovery, characterization, and advanced manufacturing capabilities. Dr. Lash earned his B.S. in Mathematics with emphasis in Physics and



Computer Science from Indiana University and his M.S. and Ph.D. in Nuclear Science from the University of Michigan. As a National Science Foundation Graduate Fellow, he developed optical plasma diagnostics for studying the interaction of high intensity lasers and electron beams with metals and ceramics.

Thomas Mason

Chief Technology Officer (Defense Systems) / Directorate Fellow
Idaho National Laboratory, National and Homeland Security Directorate

Dr. Thomas Mason is a Directorate Fellow and the Chief Technology Officer for the Defense System Division of the Idaho National Laboratory's National & Homeland Security Directorate. He is an experienced application engineer with two decades of R&D experience in materials characterization, weapon effects testing and modeling, and utilizing multiple data streams to improve the fidelity of constitutive and failure modeling in hydrocodes and other simulation tools. He has expertise in texture characterization and quantitative microstructural analysis, the use of energetics to create dynamic environments, and advanced armor/survivability research and development. Dr Mason's current focus at INL includes vulnerability analysis of national security assets and critical infrastructure, as well as enabling broader community participation in dynamic system analysis. Prior to his current role at INL, Dr. Mason spent 23 years working on dual-use technology at Los Alamos National Laboratory.



Chris Metts

Vice President, Aerospace and Innovation
47G

Chris Metts is the Vice President of Project Alta, 47G's advanced air mobility (AAM) initiative. His career has included 35+ years of progressively responsible leadership both in government and industry, resulting in incredible success throughout the FAA and the global aviation community. This includes time as a transportation Attaché at US Embassies in Japan, China and Singapore, with regional responsibilities. He distinguished himself in Senior Executive Service at the FAA where he served as Chief Acquisitions Officer, VP of the ATO's PMO and as VP of US Air Traffic's En Route and Oceanic Services. In industry, he served as a corporate global VP at L3Harris and partner level executive at Deloitte, partnering with NASA to write the concept of operations document for Advanced Air Mobility (AAM). He also served on the ATCA board. Chris is a distinguished graduate of Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University and is fluent in Japanese.



Ron Poropatich

Professor of Medicine & Director of the Center for Military Medicine
University of Pittsburgh

Dr. Ronald Poropatich is the Director of the Center for Military Medicine Research and Professor of Medicine in the Division of Pulmonary, Allergy, and Critical Care Medicine at the University of Pittsburgh. He is an experienced Pulmonary/Critical Care Medicine physician who served 30 years on active duty in the US Army retiring in 2012 at the rank of Colonel with extended assignments at the Walter Reed National Military Medical Center, Bethesda, MD, the US Army Medical Research and Development Command, Fort Detrick, MD and in overseas deployed settings (Somalia, Iraq & Afghanistan). He received his medical degree from Drexel University in 1985. He completed his internship and residency in Internal Medicine at the Walter Reed National Military Medical Center, Bethesda, MD as well as his fellowships in Pulmonary and Critical Care Medicine. Dr. Poropatich is a long-standing educator/researcher with expertise in telemedicine, autonomous pre-hospital care and pulmonary/critical care medicine. He has over 80 publications in peer-reviewed medical



journals, numerous book chapters, and edited 2 books on Telemedicine. He is a diplomate of the American Board of Internal Medicine in Medicine, Pulmonary, and Critical Care Medicine, a Fellow of the American College of Physicians, American College of Chest Physicians, the American Telemedicine Association, and the American Institute for Medical Biological Engineering.

Akbar Hussain Shah

NG Fellow

Northrop Grumman Corporation

Akbar Shah is a NG Fellow within Mechanical & Energetics Engineering department of the Launch Vehicles business unit for Northrop Grumman's Launch and Exploration Division (LED) within Space Systems Sector.

Akbar is responsible for overseeing all technical aspects of Structural Analysis and Test, Loads and Dynamics, Dynamic Environments, Thermal Analysis, Parts, Materials and Processes (PM&P) and Mass Properties groups. These matrix groups provide world class analysis support to all LED programs.

Akbar has extensive experience in problem solving complex technical problems related to Defense and Aerospace Industry spanning 30 years. In his current role, Akbar provides technical, strategic, and thought leadership and mentorship to the members of M&E department. Akbar has held several positions over the last 23 years at NG's LED division, including Manager of Structural Analysis and Test group, Manager of PM&P group and lead Structural Analyst. Before joining Northrop Grumman in 2001, Akbar was a Chief Engineer of a Vertical and/or Short Take-Off and landing (V/STOL) rotorcraft at Groen Brothers Aviation, Inc (GBA). At GBA, he led an engineering team through design, analysis, manufacturing, and subsequent flight testing a four-passenger rotorcraft. He conducted extensive classical and Finite Element Analysis (FEA) of fuselage and associated structures, full scale fatigue testing of an articulated rotor system, extensive flight testing, dynamic analysis of rotor blades and was responsible for Federal Aviation Administration's FAR Part 27 certification of the rotorcraft.



Akbar holds a BSc degree in Statistics from Karachi University, Pakistan. Additionally, he holds a BS, MS and PhD degrees in Mechanical Engineering from the University of Utah, Salt Lake City, UT. His doctoral research was on studying "The effects of fretting and fatigue on a mechanically fastened aircraft joint." Akbar specializes in Fracture and Structural Mechanics, FEA, Materials Engineering, Fretting and Fatigue, Damage Tolerant Design, Stress Corrosion Cracking (SCC) and Failure Investigation of critical aerospace structures.

Northrop Grumman is a technology company, focused on global security and human discovery. Our pioneering solutions equip our customers with capabilities they need to connect, advance, and protect the U.S. and its allies. Driven by a shared purpose to solve our customers' toughest problems, our 95,000 employees define possible every day.

Angela Smith

COO of Nucleus Institute & Managing Director of Nucleus Fund
Nucleus Institute

Angela Smith is the COO of the Nucleus Institute, Utah's hub for innovation. She is Managing Director of the Nucleus Fund, a \$40m early stage venture fund. She also oversees programming and design for Convergence Hall, a world class innovation hub that facilitates interdisciplinary industry, academic, and government partnerships to generate and commercialize new ideas.

She has deep experience in both education and investing. She has invested throughout Utah and across the country for Origin Ventures, Pelion Venture Partners, Cougar Capital, and the Sorenson Impact Fund.



Ryan Wixom

Manager

Center for Integrated Nanotechnologies, Sandia National Laboratories

Ryan R. Wixom, Ph.D., is a materials scientist and research leader at Sandia National Laboratories, where he manages the Nanostructure Physics Department within the Center for Integrated Nanotechnologies (CINT). He oversees a team of more than 40 scientists and supports a national user program that hosts over 500 visiting scientists each year. His work integrates experimental and computational materials science, with contributions spanning nanoscience, shock physics, and AI/ML for materials science. Over his career, he has led major research programs for the Department of Energy and the Department of Defense, served on scientific review panels, and organized national and international technical workshops and conferences. He holds a B.S. and a Ph.D. in Materials Science from the University of Utah.

