

SPEAKER BIOS – 2017 SBIR ROAD TOUR



U.S. Air Force (USAF) **Lance Chenault**

SBIR/STTR Acquisition R&D Technical Analyst
Contractor, ABA, Inc.

Dr. Lance Chenault is an Acquisition R&D Technical Analyst for the Air Force SBIR Commercialization Readiness Program, Small Business office of the Air Force Research Laboratory. Dr. Chenault does transition planning with the Air Force Sustainment Center and the Program Executive Offices in the Air Force Life Cycle Management Center at Robins AFB, Georgia, to help them get superior technology into their facilities and weapon systems.

Dr. Chenault entered active duty in the Air Force and was assigned as a Computer Technician at Feldberg RRL, Rhein Main AFB, West Germany, and later as a Digital Principles Instructor at Keesler AFB, Mississippi. Selected for the Airman Education and Commissioning Program (AECPP), Dr. Chenault earned a B.S. in Aerospace Engineering at the University of Missouri-Rolla and an OTS Commission. He was initially assigned as a System Project Manager on the Small ICBM at Norton AFB, California. He was subsequently assigned to the High-Speed Division of the Wright Laboratory's Propulsion Directorate working on the National AeroSpace Plane (NASP) and joint U.S./Russian scramjet engine tests. He went on to serve as the Senior Propulsion Technology Manager, Chief of the Integration and Demonstration Branch and Chief of the Aero Sciences Laboratory, Air Vehicles Directorate, Air Force Research Laboratory, WPAFB, Ohio. Following his Air Force career, Dr. Chenault was the Director, Innovation and Technology Partnerships, Ohio Aerospace Institute. In this capacity, he led numerous multidisciplinary Integrated Product Teams (IPT's) comprised of universities, industry, and government, in aerospace-related technologies. This included a geographically dispersed 14-man IPT to transition Air Force Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) technology. This team connected over 200 small businesses with 15 major DoD Prime vendors in the Space and Missile, Electronic Systems, Air Armament, and Aeronautical Systems technology areas. Dr. Chenault is currently works at ABDA, Inc. and joined the AF SBIR CRP team over 10 years ago. Dr. Chenault holds a Ph.D. from the Air Force Institute of Technology, WPAFB, Ohio and an MBA from Wright State University, Fairborn, Ohio.



U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) **Rachel Melnick**

National Program Leader for Agroclimatology

Rachel Melnick is the National Program Leader for Agroclimatology at USDA National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA). She manages the Plant Production and Protection – Engineering area of the USDA SBIR program as one of 10 National Program Leaders with responsibility for different parts of the SBIR Program. Rachel also manages competitive research and extension programs outside of the SBIR program such as Climate Masters and Innovations at the Nexus of Food, Energy and Water Systems (INFEWs) with NSF.

Prior to joining the USDA SBIR team, Rachel served as an AAAS Science and Technology Policy Fellow at USDA NIFA, and was a postdoctoral research plant pathologist at the USDA Agricultural Research Service. She has a background working in integrated pest management and improvement of crop

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production under drought. Rachel received her B.S. in Biology from Bloomsburg University, and her M.S. and Ph.D. in Plant Pathology from Penn State University.



U.S. Department of Energy (DOE)

Chris O'Gwin

Outreach and Assistance Program Manager

The mission of the DOE SBIR/STTR Programs Office is to manage the administration and evaluation of about 2,000 Phase I and Phase II grant applications each year. The annual budget of the DOE SBIR/STTR programs is \$205M and enables the DOE to award approximately 400 Phase I and II grants every year.

Chris O'Gwin is principally responsible for managing the DOE SBIR/STTR Outreach and Assistance Program. In this capacity, he facilitates a nationwide effort to develop and increase its underrepresented small business research and development base in search of SBIR/STTR grant opportunities. Chris has worked for the DOE since November 1987, holding positions of leadership in both administrative and technical organizations. He received a B.S. in Business Education from Longwood University and an M.S. in Government from the Johns Hopkins University.



U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS)

Peter Nielsen

Management and Program Analyst

Peter Nielsen joined the DHS/SBIR Program in August 2016 as a Program Analyst.

Prior to this, Peter worked for the DHS/Science and Technology, Finance and Budget Division as a financial analyst. Prior to joining the federal government, Peter worked in municipal government as a management and budget analyst and in the private sector as an investment advisor and banker. Peter was born in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania and spent his youth in Grinnell, Iowa. Peter received his B.A. (1983) in English and Ancient Greek from Cornell College in Mt. Vernon, Iowa, and his MPA / MSW (Public Administration and Social Work) in 1996 from West Virginia University in Morgantown, West Virginia. Peter lives in Falls Church, Virginia.



Missile Defense Agency (MDA)

Sloan Armstrong

SBIR/STTR Operations Manager

Ms. Sloan Armstrong is from Huntsville, Alabama. She earned her B.S. in Management Information Systems from the University of Alabama in Huntsville in 1988 and her M.S. in Management from Florida Institute of Technology in 2003.

Sloan began her career with United Technologies in 1989 in contract pricing. She continued in the pricing and contracts career field with various contractors through 2006 when she joined the Missile

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Defense Agency (MS) as a contractor. Sloan began supporting the MDA SBIR/STTR program in 2008 and became a civilian in 2010. Sloan has been the Operations Manager for the MDA SBIR/STTR programs since 2012.



National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) Lynn Garrison

SBIR/STTR Technology Transfer Lead – Marshall Space Flight Center

Lynn Garrison serves as one of the Marshall Space Flight Center Technology Transition Leads for the Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR)/Small Business Technology Transfer (STTR) programs, which help the agency meet federal research and development needs and increase private-sector commercialization of innovations derived from federal R&D. Ms. Garrison also serves as Marshall's Small Business Technical Advisor in support of the MSFC Small Business Office.

Ms. Garrison was previously the resource manager for the Propulsion Laboratory and the Materials and Processes Laboratory. She was recently awarded the 2016 NASA Agency-Level Small Business Advocates Award as the Small Business Technical Advisory/Coordinator of the Year.



Department of Commerce - National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) Mary Clague

SBIR Program Director/NAIS Administrator

Mary Clague is the Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) Program Manager at the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST). She has worked in NIST's Technology Partnerships Office since 2001 and has been with the SBIR Program for the past 14 years.

Prior to working at NIST, she held corporate information positions with Lockheed Martin, COMSAT Corp., and CALCULON. Ms. Clague graduated from the University of Maryland with a degree in Technology Management.



National Science Foundation (NSF) Ben Schrag

Senior Program Director for SBIR/STTR

Ben Schrag is the acting Deputy Division Director for the Division of Industrial Innovation and Partnerships at NSF, and the Senior Program Director for the SBIR/STTR program. He joined the NSF as a Program Director in 2009, leading the Advanced Materials and Instrumentation portfolio in the Small Business Innovation Research and Small Business Technology Transfer programs.

Prior to NSF, he was the Director of Research and Development at Micro Magnetics, where he led a development effort to commercialize a new family of high-performance magnetic microsensor products

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for demanding consumer and military applications. Ben received his Ph.D. in Physics from Brown University.



U.S. Small Business Administration

Brittany Sickler

Outreach and Partnership Strategist, Office of Innovation

Brittany Sickler serves as outreach, training, and partnership strategist for the SBA's Office of Investment and Innovation. Her primary duties support the advancement of the Small Business Innovation Research/Small Business Technology Transfer (SBIR/ STTR) programs, which enable small businesses to explore their technological potential and profit from its

commercialization. She oversees initiatives to increase understanding of SBIR/STTR opportunities with SBA offices and partner networks across the country, as well as manages the agency's Federal and State Technology (FAST) Partnership Program. Brittany spent almost four years in SBA's North Dakota District Office as an Economic Development Specialist, building and strengthening connections throughout the state, particularly with regional startup networks and rural communities. She also served as Special Advisor in SBA's Office of Entrepreneurial Development, advancing strategic initiatives and coordinating SBA's first Virtual Conference.

Prior to SBA, Brittany served in Guatemala as a Peace Corps Volunteer and Volunteer Leader in the Sustainable Community Tourism program, a combination of economic development and environmental conservation. She was a Masters International Fellow, completing a Master's in International Community Economic Development from Southern New Hampshire University. She also holds degrees in Business Administration and Spanish from Indiana Wesleyan University. Her career in economic development started in Southern Florida with microlender ACCION USA, providing small business loans to individuals who could not access traditional credit.



U.S. Special Operations Command (USSOCOM)

Anthony Aldrich

SBIR Program Manager

Mr. Anthony J. Aldrich is the Small Business Innovative Research (SBIR) Program Manager for Special Operations Forces, Acquisition, Technology and Logistics (SOF AT&L), Special Operations Command (USSOCOM), MacDill Air Force Base, Florida. He is responsible for all USSOCOM SOF AT&L SBIR funded activities. Mr. Aldrich has over 14 years of civilian Federal service.

Mr. Aldrich entered Federal Service in 2002 as a Physicist at Eglin Air Force Base in Fort Walton Beach, Florida where he served in the Guided Weapons Evaluation Facility as a Hardware-In-the-Loop Test and Evaluation engineer. In 2005, he transferred to the Eglin Range Support Squadron serving as an Electronics Engineer and Program Manager for the threat radar, tracking radar and telemetry systems. Mr. Aldrich transferred to Us Army Program Executive Office for Simulation, Training and Instrumentation in 2009, where he supported the Range Radar Replacement Program as a Project Director.

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Prior to entering Civil Service, Mr. Aldrich worked at various small businesses designing Industrial Control Systems, Medical Equipment and Aviation Electronics. Mr. Aldrich earned his Bachelor of Science degree in Physics in 1984 from the University of Oklahoma, Norman.



National Science Foundation (NSF) **Murali Nair**

Program Director for Electronic Hardware, Robotics, and Wireless Technologies with the SBIR/STTR Program

Murali S. Nair is a Program Director in the areas of Electronic Hardware, Robotics, and Wireless Technologies with the SBIR/STTR Program. Prior to joining NSF, he was the Founder CEO of a Bluetooth wireless product company. In this capacity, he raised equity capital for worldwide operations in the U.S., China and India. He designed, planned and implemented the product development cycle, and managed the marketing strategy, strategic alliances and business development processes. Before that, he was a Senior Systems Engineer at L-3 Communications where he provided strategic advice to the Executive VP for a complete re-plan of the Hughes contract for real-time, embedded ground control software for the \$350M PANAMSAT communications satellite.

Prior to joining L-3 Communications, he was a Mission Planner at Motorola Iridium where he was involved in all aspects of satellite operations including orbit determination, generating guidance targets and orbital slot placement. Before joining Iridium, he was a faculty member at Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University, where he developed an entire Space Systems Design Lab from concept inception to fully operational mode and national prominence, and supervised five space system designs, three of which were winners in the National AIAA/Loral Design Competition. Mr. Nair is a recipient of awards including NSF's second highest award for meritorious service and the President's Innovation Award for Space Systems Design courses while at Embry-Riddle. Murali is a graduate of the Indian Institute of Technology and the University of Texas. He is a registered professional engineer in the State of Florida.



U.S. Patent and Trademark Office (USPTO) **Christal Sheppard**

Director of the Midwest Regional USPTO in Detroit

Dr. Christal Sheppard joined the USPTO in 2015 as Director of the Midwest Regional USPTO in Detroit. Prior to joining the USPTO she was an assistant professor of law at the University of Nebraska, where she co-founded a program of Concentrated Study in Intellectual Property law at the Law College.

Dr. Sheppard has a M.S. and Ph.D. in Cellular and Molecular Biology from the University of Michigan, and a J.D. from Cornell University Law School. She has over two decades of Science and Intellectual Property Law and Policy experience including as a practicing attorney at Foley & Lardner and the United States International Trade Commission and internships with Judge Rader at the United States Court of Appeals for the Federal Circuit and the Executive Office of the President's Office of Science and Technology Policy. In 2005, Dr. Sheppard completed Harvard University's John F. Kennedy School of

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Government's Executive Education for Senior Managers in Government program, and completed George Mason University's Law and Economics Institute program in 2014. Her successful career in intellectual property law and policy includes her tenure as Chief Counsel on Patents and Trademarks for the United States House of Representatives Committee on the Judiciary where she was integral in many endeavors including the Leahy-Smith America Invents Act, the most comprehensive change to this nation's intellectual property laws in over 60 years.



U.S. Navy
Lee Ann Boyer
Navy SBIR/STTR

Lee Ann Boyer Currently serves as program manager of the Department of Navy's Small Business Innovative Research Commercialization Readiness Program. Primary responsibilities include monitoring and improving the transition rate of SBIR developed technologies.

Miss Boyer previously served as Deputy Director of Contract and Grant Awards for the Office of Naval Research (ONR). Prior contracting assignments include the Naval Regional Contracting Center Washington DC and the Strategic Systems Programs Office. Miss Boyer's background includes B.S. Military Science and Sociology-Jacksonville State University 1980; M. S. Contracts and Acquisition Management Florida Institute of Technology 1990; Juris Doctorate George Mason University 2000; M. Ed. Northcentral University 2010; Senior Executive Fellow-Harvard University Kennedy School of Government 2002; Federal Executive Institute 2004. Miss Boyer's awards include the Department of Defense Superior Civilian Service and Meritorious Civilian Service awards.



U.S. Department of Transportation
Melissa Wong
Program Manager

Melissa Wong has been the Program Manager for USDOT's SBIR program since joining the Volpe Center in 2013. In addition to her work on the SBIR program, she also supports the USDOT's program for Connected and Automated Vehicles.

Prior to working at the Volpe Center, Melissa worked for the US Census Bureau, the City of New York, a startup research and consulting firm, and owned her own flower shop. She holds a Master's of Public Administration from Columbia University and a Bachelor of Arts from Macalester College.



U.S. Department of Transportation
Sophie Jantz
Technology Policy Analyst

Sophie Jantz is a Technology Policy Analyst for the Innovative Research Program office at Volpe, The National Transportation Systems Center. She is a graduate of the University of Michigan, where she received her Bachelor of Arts in Economics and Masters of Urban and Regional Planning.

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National Institutes of Health
Robert Vinson

Program Manager, SBIR

Mr. Vinson serves as a Program Manager for the National Institutes of Health (NIH) SBIR/STTR Program in the Office of Extramural Programs, Office of Extramural Research (OER). In this role, he is responsible for providing resources to Federal staffers and access to critical information for the small business community seeking early-stage Federal funding. His duties include serving as the Contracting Officer's Representative for the NIH Niche Assessment Program and the Commercialization Accelerator Program. These programs provide technical assistance, market analysis, and commercialization guidance for NIH SBIR/STTR Phase I and Phase II awardees. Rob is also the OER Task Manager for the NIH Performance Outcomes Data System.

Before joining the SBIR/STTR Program Office, he was a Senior Grants Policy Analyst at the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute (NHLBI). In that role, he managed initiatives and special projects on a variety of grants and administrative policy issues. Rob had been with NHLBI since 1993 where his career began as a Grants Management Specialist and rose to the positions of Team Leader, Grants Management Officer, and Branch Chief. Prior to joining NIH Rob was a commercial loan officer, with an emphasis on small business development and community revitalization.



National Institutes of Health
Patricia Swayne

SBIR/STTR Specialist

Patti Swayne joined the NIH SBIR/STTR Program from the Chamber of Commerce for Greater Philadelphia where she worked to promote collaboration and innovation in the regional business community through unique health care, education, and community outreach initiatives.

As the Communications Specialist, Patti helps develop, implement, and evaluate the team's outreach strategy which specifically targets demographics that historically have lower application rates, including Women-owned and Socially Disadvantaged small businesses. Patti is invested in progressive public health initiatives, the impact of technology in solutions and delivery of care, and aging research. Her goal is to translate important, effective information into a language that everyone can understand. Patti Swayne is a proud alumna of Temple University, where she earned a Bachelor of Arts in Communications.



Federal Lab Consortium
Brooke Pyne

Midwest Coordinator

Ms. Pyne serves as NSWC Crane's ORTA/T2 Program Manager and Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) Program Manager as well as the Federal Lab Consortium (FLC) Midwest Coordinator. Ms. Pyne's expansive responsibilities include strategic management of the lab's intellectual capital

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and SBIR/STTR Program; planning, administration and monitoring of T2 mechanisms; marketing, negotiation and management of patent licensing; various economic development commercialization activities onsite and outside NSWC Crane focused on technology-based economic development; outreach activities with external entities; multiple presentations and briefs delivered throughout the year to onsite lab visitors; and numerous external speaking engagements.

Since her T2 appointment in the fall of 2014, Ms. Pyne's efforts have steadily expanded across the lab's large-scope potential for commercialization. The Navy's third largest installation, the facility employs more than 2,000 scientists, engineers, and technicians to fulfill its R&D mission on surface sensors, strategic systems, special warfare devices, and electronic warfare systems. Over a short time, she has skillfully leveraged the rich NSWC Crane collection of technology advances into exceptional tech transfer success that has results in record T2 partnering collaborations the last two years. Ms. Pyne has a Bachelor's degree in Business Administration from Indiana Wesleyan, a certification in Professional Management from Indiana University Kelley School of Business, and a Master's certification in Public Management from Indiana University – Purdue University Indianapolis (IUPUI). She is also the recipient of the 2017 FLC National T2 Rookie of the Year as well as the SBIR/STTR National Tibbett's Award.



U.S. Navy
Chris McNeal

Presidential Management Fellow

Chris McNeal is a 2015 Presidential Management Fellow at the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA). Chris works with the Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR), Small Business Technology Transfer (STTR), and Growth Accelerator Fund Competition (GAFC) programs with the Office of Investment and Innovation. SBA acts as the coordinating agency for the

SBIR/STTR programs. It directs the agencies' implementation of these programs, reviews their progress, and reports annually to Congress on its operation.

Chris supports outreach efforts for SBIR/STTR events, program strategy, and the reauthorization efforts for the SBIR/STTR programs. In addition to the Office of Investment and Innovation, Chris worked for the SBA's Office of the Chief Financial Officer, Office of the Administrator, and the Office of Capital Access. Chris is currently on detail to the U.S. Department of the Navy SBIR/STTR Program, supporting outreach initiatives and policy guidance efforts.



National Institutes of Health
Natalia Kruchinin

NIAID SBIR/STTR Program Coordinator

Dr. Kruchinin is a Small Business Program Coordinator at National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases (NIAID) NIH. In her current position, Dr. Kruchinin serves as the program director of the NIAID Small Business Center and a senior program leader and advisor to the director of Office of Research Training and Special Programs (ORTSP) and to the Director of the

Division of Extramural Activities (DEA) and provide leadership, coordination, and oversight of a broad range of scientific and managerial activities and processes within the NIAID. Prior to NIAID Dr. Kruchinin served as a Program Director with the SBIR Development Center at the National Cancer Institute, NIH.

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There, she assisted hundreds of small businesses in the *Cancer Diagnostics & Therapeutics* field in securing government funding for innovative research and development projects with high commercial potential.

Dr. Kruchinin has formal training and work experience in several cross-cutting science areas. Her research experience covers university, biotechnology industry, and government settings. Before joining NIAID and NCI, she held positions as a manager of the Molecular Diagnostics Application lab at QIAGEN Inc., senior scientist at Motorola Life Sciences and research scientist at Oak Ridge National Laboratory, Tennessee. Dr. Kruchinin holds a Ph.D. in molecular biology from Saint Petersburg State University, Russia.



U.S. Small Business Administration

Edsel Brown

Assistant Director for the Office of Technology

Mr. Brown has served with the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) since 1990. He is currently the Assistant Director for the Office of Technology. In this position, he provides oversight over the Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) and Small Business Technology Transfer (STTR) Programs.

He has served in several other positions during his tenure at SBA including: Assistant Administrator for Management and Technical Assistance, Office of Business Development; Deputy Assistant Administrator, Office of Small Disadvantaged Business; and Financial Analyst, Office of Small Business Investment Companies.

Mr. Brown's experience includes owning and operating a Liberty Tax Service franchise, serving as a Financial Advisor to a handful of broker dealers, and operating a solo law firm focusing on sport and entertainment law. He has been very active in community affairs and has belonged to a number of organizations including Rotary International, YMCA, NAACP, Calvert County (MD) Economic Development Commission, Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, and a Board Member to several Chambers of Commerce. A native of Plainfield, New Jersey, Mr. Brown holds B.A. (Government) and M.A. (Public Administration) degrees from Ohio University. He also holds a J.D. (Law) degree from the University of Toledo College of Law.



Federal Laboratory Consortium (FLC)

Rick Christ

Midwest FLC Support

Rick Christ has more than 22 years of experience in program/acquisition management, logistics, and engineering. He has been involved with the FLC and technology transfer for more than 19 years, and has assisted the FLC Technology/Laboratory Locator with promoting technology transfer for all federally funded laboratories. He has provided support to the FLC Midwest Region in his role as the Regional Project Leader for the last five years.

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Mr. Christ has assisted with transferring labs' research projects into the commercial sector via the Technology Locator service, researched many different R&D projects with licensing potential, and became familiar with many areas of technology research. He also assisted with several innovative pilot projects intended to find new methods of successfully marketing Midwest intellectual property to specific industry sectors. He currently manages the FLC Midwest Region Support Office (RSO), and is responsible for the technical and financial aspects of all Midwest RSO activities.

Mr. Christ also manages support for the National Voluntary Laboratory Accreditation Program (NVLAP) for the National Institute of Standards & Technology (NIST). In this role, he developed internal procedures for contracting onsite laboratory assessments and handling payments from over 800 domestic and international research laboratories. He has a B.S. in Mechanical Engineering from Drexel University, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.



Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA) Susan Nichols

Program Director, Small Business Programs Office

Ms. Nichols started her career of 28+ years with the Department of Defense at the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers where she held a variety of positions in financial management, personnel management, program analysis/management, computer information systems development, and training from 1988 until 2004. She served as the US Army SBIR Program Manager at the US Army Materiel Command from 2004-2008, where she developed and successfully implemented several program and system modernization initiatives.

Ms. Nichols is currently serving at DARPA as Small Business Programs Office Director, where she is focused on creating an environment that considers small businesses a primary source of innovative solutions; expanding small business relationships and training opportunities within DoD and other federal agencies; and enabling the small business community to create and transition radical, game-changing technologies that benefit the Warfighter, the federal government, and the commercial marketplace. Ms. Nichols holds a Bachelor of Science in Management and Computer Information Systems from Park University, and a Master of Public Administration from American University.