

For Immediate Release: July 20, 2026

FORMER AI21 LABS CHIEF POLICY OFFICER AND MICROSOFT EXECUTIVE TO PRESENT AT VST CHANCELLOR'S DINNER 2026

VANCOUVER, BC. July 20 2026. Dr. Shanen Boettcher, former Chief Policy Officer at AI21 Labs and former Microsoft executive, will be the keynote speaker at the annual VST Chancellor's Dinner on September 24, 2026.

Dr. Boettcher's work explores the intersection of artificial intelligence, spirituality, ethics, and human-machine communication. After more than 25 years in leadership roles across the technology sector—including Microsoft, Netscape, Accenture, and Responsible Innovation Labs—he returned to graduate studies and earned a PhD from the University of St Andrews. His doctoral research examined human-machine communication, including privacy, surveillance, the sharing of personal information, and the ways people engage with artificial intelligence on deeply personal and existential questions.



Throughout his career, Dr. Boettcher has advised CEOs, led global product management, engineering, and marketing teams, developed award-winning technologies, and acquired and integrated technologies and talent across Fortune 500 companies, startups, and non-profit organizations. During his time at Microsoft, he served as General Manager of the Startup Business Group within Microsoft Research, General Manager of the Windows Server and Azure businesses in the United States, and General Manager of Product Management and Marketing for Office and Office 365. Earlier in his career, he was a product manager at Netscape, where he authored *The Netscape Intranet Solution* (John Wiley & Sons). He has also published and defended several U.S. patents.

Dr. Boettcher is the author of *Artificial Intelligence and Spirituality: Relating Religious Information and Religious Knowledge* (Springer, 2026), which examines the relationship between artificial intelligence, spirituality, and religious knowledge, and considers how AI is influencing personal worldviews and the ways people seek and engage with faith. He holds bachelor's degrees in economics and international relations from Carroll College, a master's degree in education from the University of Warwick, and a PhD from the University of St Andrews.

The title of Dr. Shanen Boettcher's keynote lecture is ***Christo et Litteris (Christ and Letters): AI and Practical Theology***. VST is pleased to welcome him as the keynote speaker for this year's Chancellor's Dinner.

About The VST Chancellor's Dinner

The 2026 VST Chancellor's Dinner is a gathering of invested individuals who recognize the enduring need for theological education to be thoughtful, engaged, and generous, and who are courageously choosing to create that future. This year's dinner will be held on Thursday, September 24 at University Golf Club. Funds raised will support the Chancellor's Award, Student Bursaries, and the *Thoughtful, Engaged, & Generous Campaign for the Future*. The 2026 Chancellor's Scholars, recipients of VST's most generous award, will be honoured and presented with certificates by Chancellor Catherine Evans. The evening will also feature music from Jason Wood, VST Alumnus, and a conversation with a student panel.

For Immediate Release: July 20, 2026

FORMER AI21 LABS CHIEF POLICY OFFICER AND MICROSOFT EXECUTIVE TO PRESENT AT VST CHANCELLOR'S DINNER 2026

Tickets are \$200 per person or \$2,000 for tables of ten. A portion of the reservation fee is eligible for a charitable receipt. Please contact Samuel Yun for more information or to make your reservation: (604) 822-6315 or syun@vst.edu.

About VST

The Vancouver School of Theology is called to educate and form thoughtful, engaged, and generous Christian leaders for the church and the world. This work is made possible through the dedication of caring, competent, and committed faculty and staff who bring VST's mission to life. A change agent and innovator for the church, VST is recognized internationally as a leading theological school and is an affiliated college of the University of British Columbia.

VST celebrates its foundational partnerships with the Anglican Church of Canada, the United Church of Canada, and the Presbyterian Church in Canada, and welcomes students from many Christian communions, the global church, and other faith traditions through the Inter-Religious Studies Program, as well as Indigenous communities. For 40 years, the Indigenous Studies Program has been integral to VST's mission, grounding its commitments in relationship and mutual respect.

VST is a two-time recipient of the prestigious Pathways for Tomorrow grants from the Lilly Endowment; a first grant in redefining the critical role of Theological Field Education in preparing clergy, and a second grant supports excellence in congregational leadership. Central to its mandate, VST prepares ministers, priests, and pastors to lead flourishing congregations. VST is accredited by the Government of British Columbia and by the Association of Theological Schools.

VST traces its roots to predecessor schools, beginning with Columbian College, founded in 1892 in New Westminster. Formally established in 1971 through the amalgamation of Union and Anglican theological colleges, VST celebrated its 50th Anniversary in 2021 and continues this longstanding legacy of theological education in the region.

The Vancouver School of Theology acknowledges that it is located on the traditional, ancestral, and unceded territory of the *xwməθkwəyəm* (Musqueam) People.

Contact: Kimberly Miranda

Marketing and Communications Officer
Vancouver School of Theology
6015 Walter Gage Road, Vancouver, BC Canada, V6T 1Z1
kmiranda@vst.edu • 604-822-9427