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He earned undergraduate degrees and his Ph.D. in physical chemistry from Case Western Reserve University, and the advanced business administration certificate program at Harvard Business School.

He is a Fellow of the National Academy of Inventors and was named 2020 Laboratory Director of the Year by the Federal Laboratory Consortium. Dr. Copan serves with the National Academies of Science, Engineering and Medicine Leadership Council for the Government-University-Industry-Philanthropy Research Roundtable (GUIPRR), and with the Council on Competitiveness. Dr. Copan is also chair of the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) Section on Industrial Research and Technology. He is a Fellow of the National Academy of Inventors (FNAI) and was named 2020 Laboratory Director of the Year by the Federal Laboratory Consortium (FLC). In 2022, he received the Baldrige Foundation Award for Leadership Excellence in Government.