2024 MIT Startup Ecosystem Conference

April 30, 2024 8:00 am - 5:30 pm

8:00 AM
Registration & Networking
Opening Remarks

9:00 AM

Gayathri Srinivasan
Executive Director, MIT Corporate Relations

Dr. Gayathri Srinivasan became Executive Director of MIT Corporate Relations beginning February 15, 2024.

As Executive Director, Dr. Srinivasan leads the growth of the ILP and Startup Exchange, building on a roster of over 200+ member companies, and forging impactful connections between global business leaders and MIT faculty.

Dr. Srinivasan is a distinguished scientist, who received her PhD in Microbiology from The Ohio State University in 2004, where she contributed to the discovery of the 22nd amino acid, Pyrrolysine (2002). She first came to MIT as an NIH Postdoctoral Fellow in Prof. Tom Rajbhandary’s lab, where her research focused on understanding protein synthesis mechanism in Archaea.

Dr. Srinivasan subsequently moved into the business development and technology licensing space, serving in MIT’s Technology Licensing Office where she helped commercialize technologies in medical devices and alternative energies. She then moved to UMass Medical School’s Office of Technology Management in 2009 and to Emory University in Atlanta in 2014, as the Director of Public and Private Partnerships for the Woodruff Health Sciences Center. In 2019, Dr. Srinivasan joined Emory’s Office of Corporate Relations as Executive Director, and, in 2021, she led the Office of Corporate and Foundation Relations.

Catarina Madeira
Director, MIT Startup Exchange

Catarina has been working with the Cambridge/Boston startup ecosystem for over 10 years and joined Corporate Relations with a solid network in the innovation and entrepreneurial community. Prior to MIT, she was part of the team that designed and launched the startup accelerator IUL MIT Portugal, which was later rebranded to Building Global Innovators. She was based in Lisbon and worked in direct relation with the Cambridge team. She held positions including Operations Coordinator, Program Manager, and Business Developer. The accelerator soon achieved steady growth in large part due to the partnerships that Catarina led with regional and global startup ecosystems. After that, she worked at NECEC, leading a program that connects cleantech startups and industry. In this role, she developed and built a pipeline of startups and forged strong relationships with both domestic and European companies. She has also held positions in Portugal and France, including at Saboaria e Perfumaria Confiança and L’Oréal as Technical Director and Pharmacist. Catarina earned her bachelor’s in chemistry and pharmaceutical sciences in Portugal. She went on to earn her Master of Engineering for Health and Medicines in France.
Presenting innovation as an iterative process where one goes through several cycles in the areas of technology, market, and implementation. This talk gives concrete examples of how corporates can find new directions and how to build a better innovation system collectively.
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Lesley Millar-Nicholson
Executive Director, MIT Technology Licensing Office

Lesley Millar-Nicholson is the Executive Director of MIT’s Technology Licensing Office (TLO) and was part of the Founding Leadership team of MIT Office of Strategic Alliances and Technology Transfer (OSATT) formed in 2019. As TLO Executive Director, she leads a team of technology transfer professionals. Together, they manage MIT’s intellectual assets and technology transfer process involving over 11,000 unique pending and issued US and foreign patents, and hundreds of copyright and open source assets. The team engages broadly with stakeholders to facilitate engagements leading to licenses for qualified third parties to deliver on the TLO mission to have impact through technology commercialization.

Prior to arriving in Cambridge Ms. Millar-Nicholson had served for ten years as Director of the Office of Technology Management (OTM) at the University of Illinois, Urbana/Champaign.

Ms. Millar-Nicholson is a past President Board of Governors of Certified Licensing Professionals Inc, a member of AUTM and the Licensing Executive Society, and a past Board Member of Cambridge Enterprise, UK. A native of Scotland, Ms. Millar-Nicholson has a B.Ed., M.Ed., MBA and is a Certified Licensing Professional.

This panel will focus on the most effective approaches for operating at the nexus of university, industry, and early-stage ventures. From invention to market, creating a favorable environment for technology development, collaborations, and accelerated commercialization.
10:45 AM  Networking Break

11:10 AM  MIT Technology Review’s List of 10 Breakthrough Technologies
Amy Nordrum
Executive Editor of Operations
MIT Technology Review

11:40 AM  Startup Lightning Talks I
Alicia Chong Rodriguez
Founder and CEO
Bloomer Tech

Christian Wentz
Founder and CEO
Gradient

Daphne Pariser
Postdoctoral Researcher
HeronAI

Jerry Shu
Co-Founder
Lendica

Stewart Peña Feliz
Co-Founder and CEO
MacroCycle

Mathew Ellis
Portable, silent, reliable, long-endurance power anywhere, anytime, and from any fuel
Mesodyne

Katie Trauth Taylor
CEO and Co-Founder
Narratize

12:20 PM  Lunch & Startup Exhibit
Ron Spangler has been a Program Director in Corporate Relations since late 2013. Currently, he manages a portfolio of companies in the mining, energy, aerospace, and defense industries. Prior to joining MIT Corporate Relations, Ron had a twenty-year career in industry, focused mainly on several MIT-connected startup companies. Ron received his doctorate in Aeronautics and Astronautics from MIT in 1994.

Brendan Smith
Co-Founder & CEO
SiTration

Saskia Duyvesteyn
Chief Advisor of Research & Development
Rio Tinto

Captain Aisha Saeed Harib
Head of Knowledge, Innovation, and Development Center
Dubai Police

Joshua Sarmir
CEO
SplitSage

Fostering collaborations between MIT-connected startups and corporates is part of MIT Startup Exchange mission. This panel features two successful collaborations that Startup Exchange and ILP helped form with startups and ILP corporate members. Panelists will talk about the different types of engagement, how they took shape, and what’s next as they keep progressing.
2:15 PM  Startup Lightning Talks II

John Greenfield  
Head of Business Development  
Noya

Tairan Wang  
Co-Founder & CEO  
Sangtera

Kanwar Singh  
CEO and CO-Founder  
Skyline Nav AI

Chris Mannion  
Founder  
Sonar Talent

Heidi Wyle  
Founder & CEO  
Venti Technologies

Tim Spong  
CEO & Co-Founder  
Vistapath

Michael Davies  
CEO  
WKD SMRT

2:55 PM  Networking Break & Startup Exhibit
Myths About Entrepreneurship
William Aulet
Managing Director of the Martin Trust Center for MIT Entrepreneurship and the Ethernet
Inventors Professor of the Practice, MIT Sloan School of Management

Bill is changing the way entrepreneurship is understood, taught, and practiced around the world. He is an award-winning educator and author whose current work is built off the foundation of his 25-year successful business career, first at IBM, and then as a three-time serial entrepreneur. During this time, he directly raised over a hundred million dollars and, more importantly, created hundreds of millions of dollars of shareholder value through his companies. Since 2009, Bill has been responsible for leading the development of entrepreneurship education across MIT at the Trust Center. His first book, "Disciplined Entrepreneurship," was released in August 2013, has been translated into over 20 languages, and has been the content for three online edX courses, which have been taken by hundreds of thousands of people in 200 different countries. The accompanying follow on book, "Disciplined Entrepreneurship Workbook," was released in April 2017. He has widely published in places such as the Wall Street Journal, TechCrunch, the Boston Globe, the Sloan Management Review, the Kauffman Foundation, Entrepreneur Magazine, MIT Sloan Experts, and more. He has been a featured speaker on shows such as CNBC's Squawk Box, BBC News, Bloomberg News, as well as at events and conferences around the world. He has degrees from Harvard and MIT and is a board member of MITEK Systems (NASDAQ: MITK) and XL Hybrids Inc. (privately held) as well as a visiting professor at University of Strathclyde (Scotland). On July 1, 2017, Bill was named a Professor of the Practice at MIT Sloan, the first at the school in the area of entrepreneurship since Alex d’Arbeloff received the designation in 2003. Bill has earned external recognition as well for his efforts, which include Boston 50 on Fire, 2017 Favorite MBA Professors from Poets and Quants, and 2018 Nannerl Keohane Distinguished Visiting Professorship at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and Duke University. In 2019, Bill was awarded the Outstanding Contributions to Advancing Innovation and Entrepreneurship Award by the Deshpande Foundation. In 2021, Bill was recognized by the United States Association for Small Business and Entrepreneurship (USASBE) as the 2021 Entrepreneurship Educator of the Year. Disciplined Entrepreneurship has been translated to versions in Arabic, Audio (via Audible), Chinese Orthodox, Chinese Simplified, Croatian, Danish, German, Greek, Farsi, Japanese, Korean (where it was named one of the top Economics & Business books of 2014 by the prestigious Kyobo Book Store), Mongolian, Polish, Russian, Spanish, Swedish, Thai, Turkish and Vietnamese. It has been a best seller in many countries including Korea, Thailand and Vietnam. It has also been the basis of a series of highly successful MIT edX online classes Entrepreneurship 101, Entrepreneurship 102 and Entrepreneurship 103 as well as the MIT Global Entrepreneurship Bootcamps which have been held at different locations including MIT, Seoul (South Korea) and Brisbane (Australia). He has also led the design and delivery of two other online edX courses, “Cultivating Entrepreneurship & Antifragility to Thrive in a Fast-Paced World” and “Fundamentals of Entrepreneurial Finance: What Every Entrepreneur Should Know.”

View full bio
Katie Rae
Founding CEO and Managing Partner, The Engine Ventures

Katie Rae is the CEO & Managing Partner of Engine Ventures. She serves as a Board Member for The Engine Funds’ portfolio companies Commonwealth Fusion Systems, Form Energy, Boston Metal, and Sublime Systems. Katie has over 10 years of experience as an investor and 25 years as a tech executive, helping build Boston into a thriving tech hub. She has invested in nearly 100 companies and advised hundreds of founders from early-stage formation to scale-up. Key investments include Pillpack (acquired by Amazon for $1 billion in 2018), Flywire, Moon, and GrabCAD. Katie has experience managing startup accelerators and business-innovation programs — she was a managing director of Techstars Boston. She was also a co-founder and Managing Director at Project 11 Ventures. In addition to her extensive investing career, she has over 20 years of experience in product development, management & operations, including holding management positions at Microsoft, Eons, AltaVista, RagingBull, Zip2, and Mirror Worlds. Katie holds an MBA from Yale and a BA in Biology from Oberlin College. Katie co-founded the Equity Summit, which convenes leading General Partners and Asset Managers of diversity across the venture capital industry.

Carmichael Roberts
Co-Founder & Managing Partner
Material Impact

In this fireside chat speakers will talk about taking science based startups to market. The potential these ventures have to transform sectors and the challenges they face as they invest early on.

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4:35 PM - 5:30 PM  Networking Reception