

MIT Industrial Liaison Program Faculty Knowledgebase Report

Geopolitics and Corporate Innovation

August 14, 2025 10:00 am - 11:00
am

10:00 AM

Welcome and Introductions

Ron Spangler

Director, [MIT Corporate Relations](#)



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Director

[MIT Corporate Relations](#)

Ron Spangler serves as the Director of Corporate Relations, managing a diverse portfolio of companies in the mining, energy, aerospace, and defense sectors. Before joining MIT Corporate Relations, Ron dedicated two decades to an industry career, primarily focusing on various MIT-connected startup companies. In 1994, he earned his doctorate in Aeronautics and Astronautics from MIT, and his extensive contributions include numerous publications and patents. Notably, Ron is also an FAA-licensed pilot with a glider rating.

10:03 AM

Investment, Startup Ecosystems and Geopolitical Calculus
Dame Fiona Murray

Associate Dean For Innovation
Co-Director MIT Innovation Initiative
William Porter (1967) Professor of Entrepreneurship
Faculty Director Legatum Center
MIT Sloan School of Management



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Professor Fiona Murray is the Associate Dean of Innovation at the MIT Sloan School of Management, William Porter (1967) Professor of Entrepreneurship. She is the Co-Director of MIT's Initiative for Innovation and also an associate of the National Bureau of Economic Research.

She is an international expert on the transformation of investments in scientific and technical innovation into innovation-based entrepreneurship that drives jobs, wealth creation, and regional prosperity. She has a special interest in entrepreneurship, the commercialization of science and the economics of entrepreneurship and innovation. She has done extensive work with entrepreneurs, governments, large corporations and philanthropists designing and evaluating the policies and programs that shape vibrant entrepreneurial ecosystems: prizes competitions, accelerators, patent licensing rules and proof of concept funding programs.

A former scientist trained at Harvard University and the University of Oxford, Murray has taught and published extensively on fostering cultures that bridge scientific innovation and entrepreneurship, building effective entrepreneurial strategies for science-based businesses (in biotech and biomedical companies and recently, clean energy), and evaluating the commercial potential of novel scientific ideas. Closely tied to real world problems, Fiona works with public policy makers and entrepreneurs designing and evaluating the policies and programs that shape vibrant entrepreneurial ecosystems: prizes competitions, accelerators, patent licensing rules and proof of concept funding programs.

She also works with large global corporations who seek to leverage the ideas of a wide range of internal scientists as well as external entrepreneurs through novel programs such as prize competitions. Her recent engagements have focused on relationships that span the public and private sectors. She is particularly interested in new emerging organizational arrangements for the effective commercialization of science, including public-private partnerships, not-for-profits, venture philanthropy, and university-initiated seed funding and innovation-focused competitions and prizes.

After a short time on the faculty of Oxford University's Said Business School, Murray joined MIT Sloan where she is now Faculty Director of the Martin Trust Center for MIT Entrepreneurship. In this role, Fiona works on the design and delivery of entrepreneurship education at the undergraduate and graduate levels. She teaches the "Innovation Teams" course, which assembles teams of students from across MIT to learn the process of technology commercialization, with a focus on evaluating a technology's potential for significant commercial and social impact. She has recently started the REAL course – Regional Entrepreneurial Acceleration Lab - which gives students practical and academic insights into the design and development of entrepreneurial ecosystems around the world. These courses encourage cross-campus collaborations that move scientific discoveries closer towards marketable products and allow for students from different stakeholder perspectives to understand the broader entrepreneurial ecosystem. She also has a particular interest in the entrepreneurial education of scientists and engineers, and in the role of women in entrepreneurship and commercialization of science.

Fiona has spoken at events worldwide about building entrepreneurial capacity built upon the engine of scientific research. She also speaks in academic and policy settings on innovation and intellectual property in the scientific community. She has been published in a wide range of journals, including Science, Nature, New England Journal of Medicine, Nature Biotechnology, American Journal of Sociology, Research Policy, Organization Science, and the Journal of Economic Behavior & Organization.

Murray has served on the faculty at MIT Sloan since 1999. In 2006 she was promoted to Associate Professor in the Technological Innovation & Entrepreneurship Strategic Management Group and in 2009 became Faculty Director of the Trust Center for MIT Entrepreneurship. Previously, Murray held positions at Harvard University, the University of Oxford, the Asian Development Bank, and United Nations Environment Program in Kenya.

10:15 AM

Fireside Chat
Dame Fiona Murray

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Closing Remarks

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