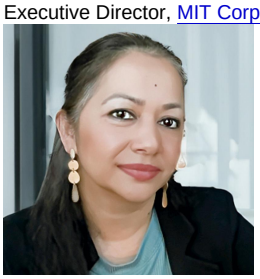
MIT Industrial Liaison Program Faculty Knowledgebase Report

2026 MIT AI Conference

April 14, 2026 8:00 am - 5:00 pm

8:00 AM	Registration with Light Breakfast
9:00 AM	Opening Remarks Gayathri Srinivasan Executive Director, MIT Corporate Relations



Gayathri Srinivasan
Executive Director
MIT Corporate Relations

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 mechanisms 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.

9:15 AM	Identifying High-Impact Use Cases for Generative AI Bruce Lawler

Generative AI is delivering real, measurable value in industry—but only for organizations that focus on the right use cases and execution patterns. This talk draws on a large-scale study of AI adoption across manufacturing and operations to highlight where Generative AI is creating the greatest impact today, from maintenance and quality to knowledge capture and decision support.

Beyond showcasing proven use cases, the presentation introduces a practical framework for identifying and prioritizing high-impact GenAI opportunities based on business value, data readiness, and time-to-value. Attendees will gain insight into how leading organizations move from experimentation to production, and how others can apply these lessons to accelerate their own GenAI initiatives.

9:45 AM

AI and the Future of Negotiation

Jared Curhan

Negotiation is a daily practice in business—with clients and partners, vendors and suppliers, supervisors and colleagues, employees and recruits. In today's complex and interconnected world, the art of negotiation has never been more crucial. Successful negotiation requires self-awareness, preparation, and practice. However, it's challenging to find partners with whom you can do the latter.

What if AI could help?

Join MIT Sloan Professor Jared Curhan as he delves into best practices and groundbreaking research surrounding AI as a tool to hone your negotiation skills in a variety of situations.

10:45 AM

Networking Break

11:15 AM

How to Make AI Useful: Moving Beyond the Hype to Real Progress in Business, Society and Life

Bryan Reimer
Research Scientist
MIT AgeLab

AI has been hyped as everything from world-saving to world-ending. But beneath the noise lies a more urgent question: is AI actually useful? And if so, useful for what, and for whom?

For several years now, AI has dominated headlines, boardrooms, and everyday conversations, with much of the focus on risks—job losses, industry disruption, ethical concerns. What's been missing is a deeper look at how to make AI genuinely practical and beneficial. That's the challenge Dr. Bryan Reimer and Magnus Lindkvist take on in their new book, *How to Make AI Useful: Moving Beyond the Hype to Real Progress in Business, Society and Life.* They cut through speculation to explore how AI can move from promise to progress, shaping tools that matter long after today's bubble bursts.

11:45 AM

Startup Lightning Talks

12:45 PM

Lunch with Startups and MIT Partners Exhibit

2:00 PM

Governing Open-Weight Generative Models

Ashia Wilson

The rapid diffusion of open-weight generative models has transformed creative practice but has also introduced new security risks, including large-scale misuse and the proliferation of illegal content such as non-consensual intimate imagery (NCII) and child sexual abuse material (CSAM). As generative systems become increasingly modular and decentralized, harmful capabilities often arise not from base models themselves but from lightweight fine-tuning and recombination strategies that are easy to distribute, difficult to trace, and hard to audit. This creates a fundamental challenge for trustworthy AI: platforms and regulators are expected to detect and mitigate high-risk models, yet legal, ethical, and adversarial constraints make direct content generation or inspection infeasible.

In this talk, I argue that securing open-weight generative ecosystems requires a shift from downstream content moderation to upstream, generation-free risk assessment at the level of model parameters. I highlight recent work showing that malicious or abusive fine-tuning objectives leave detectable signatures in weight space, enabling scalable screening and monitoring without prompting models, generating outputs, or accessing training data. More broadly, I outline a research agenda for weight-space accountability as a security primitive for open generative AI, with implications for platform governance, regulatory compliance, and the design of preventive safeguards as AI development continues to decentralize.

2:30 PM

AI that Shares our Values

Caspar Hare

We want agential AI to reflect our values, pursue our goals, and act in our interests, but what exactly are these values, goals, and interests? In this talk, Caspar will explore this foundational question, offering a framework for thinking about human objectives in the context of AI alignment.

3:00 PM

AI and The Next Industrial Revolution

David Mindell

Based on the ideas in his recent book The New Lunar Society: An Enlightenment Guide to the Next Industrial Revolution, in this talk, Mindell lays out some principles for envisioning the future of industry within a world of Artificial Intelligence. Marry product innovation to process innovation. Think in systems. Emphasize adoption. Design for resilience and flexibility. Get excited about maintenance and repair. Value knowledge at every level of work. See the human intelligence embodied in every product or system. Each is supported by examples from the original Industrial Revolution with relevance for the next one.

3:30 PM

Networking Break

4:00 PM

AI-Enabled Biological Discovery From Millions of Microbial Genomes

Yunha Hwang

Microbial genomes encode the largest molecular, biochemical and functional diversity on Earth, however, much of this diversity remains uncharacterized. Dr. Hwang's talk will focus on machine learning models and experimental approaches to discover and design novel microbial functions.These approaches enable more systematic identification of microbial capabilities and have applications in biomanufacturing, natural product discovery, and microbial technologies.

4:30 PM

Multimodal Biodiversity Monitoring

Sara Beery

Multimodal biodiversity monitoring integrates data from diverse sources, such as remote sensing, bioacoustic recordings, camera traps, citizen science, and scientific literature, to provide a more comprehensive and timely understanding of ecosystems. These modalities are complementary but heterogeneous, and traditional multimodal AI assumptions about co-registration, prevalence, and shared information content across modalities don't always hold. This talk will explore the principles, opportunities, and challenges of multimodal biodiversity monitoring, highlighting real-world applications and future directions for research.

5:30 PM

Networking Reception