

J.P.Morgan

J.P. Morgan's Boston Innovation Team Plugs into the CSAIL Startup Community

Audrey Woods, MIT CSAIL Alliances | March 30, 2026

Before he was a Vice President on J.P. Morgan's Startup Banking team, Vickrum Nabar was a founder. Having launched several startups, and invested in or collaborated with multiple others, he's well-versed in the language of innovation. Which is why he and his colleagues in J.P. Morgan's Boston-based Innovation Economy team value their connection to MIT CSAIL. As Nabar says, **"The talent and some of the problem statements that you all are solving out of MIT are ambitious."**

As a member of the research initiative [FinTechAI@CSAIL](#), J.P. Morgan has access to the full array of CSAIL Alliances benefits beyond the focus of the initiative. Over the spring of 2026, Nabar and his team have leveraged this by participating in a series of future-focused CSAIL Alliances events, including pitch events, a weekend hackathon, and the CSAIL Alliances Annual Meeting. This engagement has led to substantive follow-up conversations with at least half a dozen CSAIL-affiliated companies and ventures, offering exciting implications for customer introductions, investment connections, long-term relationships, and real-world technological impact.

ANTI-SHARK TANK & THE HACKATHON

Nabar's team kicked off their 2026 with CSAIL at the CSAIL Alliances "Anti-Shark Tank" Speed Dating Experience, an event organized by Senior Client Relations Coordinator Christiana Kalfas which flipped the script on most startup pitch events. Instead of founders pitching to judges, the corporations and investors went first, using short videos to explain what they could offer to early-stage teams trying to figure out commercialization. After watching the videos, MIT entrepreneurs were then matched with participating businesses and given one-on-one sessions in a custom, personalized, on-campus experience.

"We go to a lot of pitch events where the founders are just on stage and pitching, and then you have some judges, which is great, but can be a little bit less actionable. This was a much more unique event, where the conversation was centered around us pitching what the corporate lens is and how corporate teams can work and support startups through their scaling journey." The Anti-Shark Tank led to several follow-ups with promising teams and startups like CSAIL Alliances Startup Connect Plus member [Remote Intelligence Solutions \(RIS\)](#), a venture digitizing utility infrastructure management. Nabar sees immediate opportunity in making connections with the businesses in J.P. Morgan's customer base who would benefit from RIS's technology, offering a win-win scenario for everyone involved.

Soon after the Anti-Shark Tank event, Nabar and his colleague Chareeda Rustanavibul participated in the Agentic AI Hackathon at CSAIL, led by MIT CSAIL Director and Professor Daniela Rus. The event was designed to support current founders and aspiring student entrepreneurs and, with Nabar's current interest in agentic AI, compliance, and workflow optimization, it was a natural fit. J.P. Morgan sponsored lunch and Rustanavibul joined a panel of judges alongside several VCs.

"It was so well put together," Rustanavibul says of the Hackathon. "It was a great opportunity to interact with the students, and the projects were really well thought out. It was almost hard to fully process that they did this all within one weekend."

THE 2026 CSAIL ALLIANCES ANNUAL MEETING

J.P. Morgan's spring at CSAIL culminated in CSAIL Alliances' biggest event of the year: the CSAIL Alliances Annual Meeting. Over three days on campus, Nabar and five others from J.P. Morgan, including members of their AI research team, attended talks, engaged with CSAIL faculty, met with founders, and sampled a taste of the groundbreaking work happening at MIT. For Nabar, "one of the highlights was literally seeing robots with LLM functionality, where you can send a robot into a room, ask it to discern between a red and a blue cup, and have it pick the right one and come back. Clearly, it's the future of where robotics is going."

While the AI researchers from J.P. Morgan enjoyed breakout sessions on cybersecurity and governance, Nabar himself took full advantage of the opportunity to hear from and engage with CSAIL-affiliated startups. "I had a great experience collecting information from the pitches and founders of companies across AI governance, AI infrastructure, cybersecurity, physical AI, and more."

For Nabar, the best part of the event was how much quality time attendees got with researchers and startups. "We were able to spend a lot of time with each of these founders, which is actually rare at a conference. Normally you don't get to sit down with them for an hour to really hash everything out, from technicals to fundraising progress and pilot case studies. So it was really well-programmed in the sense that we were able to spend that time directly with founders." Also, this time could be even better utilized because of the previous CSAIL events they'd attended, giving Nabar both rapport and familiarity with the ventures being featured. "We'd been meeting with several of the companies leading up to the actual Annual Meeting in one-on-ones and dinners, so getting to see how their pitches had evolved and touch base with them was pretty great."

J.P. MORGAN: A RESOURCE FOR EARLY-STAGE FOUNDERS

Rustanavibul and Nabar emphasize the practical opportunities their group can offer CSAIL-connected founders well before they hit the bank's traditional thresholds. Rustanavibul adds, "we want to be there as a resource for startups as they think through their finances, because they're so focused on building. We want to be an advisor and a resource to support them however we can." For Nabar, the CSAIL spinouts they met at these events are "exactly the type of companies we want to meet with and understand what they're doing early on. They have the potential to grow really quickly, and J.P. Morgan can plug in and hopefully accelerate that from many different angles."

Nabar credits CSAIL Alliances for facilitating so many good conversations and encounters in such a short time, especially Client Relations Manager Philip Arsenault, who Nabar describes as "awesome. He's been a really good resource, and super responsive and creative." Going forward, Nabar is excited to work with Arsenault and the rest of the Alliances team to bring together the entrepreneurial ecosystem at large, offering the resources and support of J.P. Morgan to the ideas coming out of MIT CSAIL.

Nabar says, "that's exactly why we are here, to prove it actually matters at this early, early stage." For him, it's a personal process stemming from his own experience launching companies. "It's a very human-centric job to bring a company from zero to one. If you're sitting in big corporate all day, sometimes you don't understand the daily grind of what that actually entails, to ship something, get product market fit, create value out of nothing. So I'm pretty privileged to be able to support people who are waking up and taking on that mission every single day."

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