



Agenda

Competitiveness Conversations Across America: Growing New England's Next Generation Innovation Economy

Location

Tufts University
Joyce Cummings Center
177 College Ave
Medford, MA, 02155

June 5-6, 2025 (All Times Eastern)

June 5

3:30 pm – 4:15 pm:	Registration and Networking
4:15 pm – 5:45 pm:	Competitiveness Conversation Programming
5:45 pm – 6:15 pm:	Competitiveness Conversation Reception
6:15 pm – 8:00 pm:	Competitiveness Conversation Dinner

June 6

8:00 am – 8:30 am:	Breakfast, Networking, and Registration
8:30 am – 12:00 pm:	Competitiveness Conversation Programming
12:00 pm – 1:00 pm:	Lunch
1:00 pm – 4:30 pm:	Competitiveness Conversation Programming



June 5

3:30 PM REGISTRATION AND NETWORKING

4:15 PM WELCOME

- Dr. Sunil Kumar, President, Tufts University
- The Hon. Deborah L. Wince-Smith, President and CEO, Council on Competitiveness

4:30 PM PUTTING COMPETITIVENESS IN CONTEXT: CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

New England is one of the nation's most important centers of education, research, high technology, and finance — with reach across many industries. This panel — led by the co-hosts of this edition of the “[Competitiveness Conversations Across America](#)” and under the auspices of the [Council on Competitiveness](#) “[National Commission on Innovation and Competitiveness Frontiers](#)” — will discuss and connect two emergent and convergent domains: tech-based innovation across the blue and green economies. This panel will put into context the role each domain will play in advancing the region's long-term innovation capacity and capability, economic and productivity growth, and inclusive prosperity. At the same time, leaders will highlight the best and *next* practices for New England and the United States.

Panelists:

- Dr. Melissa Gilliam, President, Boston University
- Dr. David A. Greene, President, Colby College
- Dr. Robert Johnson, President, Western New England University
- Dr. Marlene Tromp, President Designate, University of Vermont
- **Moderator:** The Hon. Deborah L. Wince-Smith, President and CEO, Council on Competitiveness



5:15 PM CONTINUING VANNIEVAR BUSH'S SPARK OF GENIUS

U.S. colleges and universities are the lifeblood of the nation's innovation economy — developing the talent, the research, and the pathway to technologies that have differentiated the United States from every other nation over the past 75 years. Born from the vision of Tufts University graduate Vannevar Bush, this science and innovation model has evolved and responded to the challenges and opportunities facing the country for nearly a century. As America approaches its 250th birthday — and the Council its 40th — what role do America's universities play today in driving not only the research at the heart of innovation, but also in seeding the economic development crucial to place-making innovation in an era of disruption and discontinuity? This leadership dialogue will explore this issue — and offer ideas to keep the U.S. university and college system strong, relevant, and responsive to the competitiveness realities of today.

- Mr. Chad Holliday, Chair, Global Federation of Competitiveness Councils; Chair Emeritus, Council on Competitiveness
- Dr. Sunil Kumar, President, Tufts University
- The Hon. Deborah L. Wince-Smith, President and CEO, Council on Competitiveness
- **Moderator:** Mr. Jim Clifton, Chairman, Gallup

5:45 PM WELCOME RECEPTION

6:15 PM COMPETITIVENESS CONVERSATION DINNER

WELCOME REMARKS

- The Hon. Rebecca Tepper, Secretary of Energy and Environmental Affairs, Commonwealth of Massachusetts
- The Hon. Edward Markey, United States Senator from Massachusetts

8:00 PM DINNER CONCLUDES



June 6

8:00 AM BREAKFAST, NETWORKING, AND REGISTRATION

8:30 AM WELCOME ADDRESS

- Dr. Sunil Kumar, President, Tufts University

8:45 AM DEVELOPING THE PILLARS OF THE NEW ENGLAND INNOVATION ECOSYSTEM

Leaders from industry, academia, national laboratories, labor, and government will discuss the pressing challenges and significant opportunities for New England to set the national and global pace in the blue and green economies. The discussion will focus on pillars of the region's innovation economy, including talent, technology, investment, and infrastructure, which underpin the region's competitiveness and future success. This session will also highlight collaborations and best practices from within the regional innovation ecosystem that unite startups, established firms, research institutions, and government.

Key questions to consider:

- How do you define the blue and green economies, and what is their relationship to sustainable economic growth in New England and, more broadly, the United States?
- How are leaders in New England reimagining traditional frameworks to foster the development and coordination of blue and green innovation hubs at local, state, and regional levels?
- What essential policies and partnerships are critical for nurturing thriving place-based blue and green economies, which are driven by innovation?

Panelists:

- Ms. Donna Hazard, Managing Director, Investments, SeaAhead
- Dr. Keoki Jackson, Senior Vice President, The MITRE Corporation
- Dr. Dennis McGillicuddy, Senior Scientist and Chief Science Officer, Ocean and Government Affairs, Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution
- Dr. Beth Orcutt, Vice President, Research, Bigelow Laboratory for Ocean Sciences
- **Moderator:** Dr. Denise Bruesewitz, Provost Designate and Professor of Environmental Studies, Colby College



9:30 AM LEADERSHIP PERSPECTIVES ON THE FUTURE OF ENERGY SECURITY, INNOVATION, GROWTH, AND GLOBAL IMPACT

Panelists:

- Mr. Chad Holliday, Chair, Global Federation of Competitiveness Councils; Chair Emeritus, Council on Competitiveness
- Dr. Emily Reichert, CEO, Massachusetts Clean Energy Center
- **Moderator:** Dr. Reginald Brothers, Operating Partner, AE Industrial

10:15 AM BREAK

10:25 AM A MESSAGE ON INNOVATION FROM WASHINGTON

- The Hon. Susan Collins, United States Senator from Maine

10:30 AM CHARTING THE COURSE FOR THE BLUE ECONOMY — NAVIGATING INNOVATION CHANGE WAVES ACROSS MARITIME INDUSTRIES

Leading experts from academia, industry, and the scientific community will examine the challenges and opportunities at the intersection of maritime shipping and shipbuilding, fishing and aquaculture, coastal tourism, renewable energy, undersea mining, biotechnology, etc. This discussion will highlight the impacts on scientific discovery, innovative place-making, and regional economic development, ultimately creating a vision for greater productivity and prosperity in New England and coastal communities nationwide.

Key questions to consider:

- Why is leading in the blue economy critical for U.S. competitiveness?
- What challenges do oceans and coastal communities face today, and what opportunities emerge from them?
- What are the critical best practices underpinning the growth of the blue economy — and what barriers must be overcome to achieve the greatest possible impact?



Panelists:

- Ms. Jennifer Downing, Executive Director, New Bedford Ocean Cluster
- Mr. Steven Fox, Partner, Propeller VC
- Mr. Andrew Hargens, Chief Development Officer, Massport
- Mr. Nick Rotker, Chief BlueTech Strategist, Cross-Cutting Director, Advanced Maritime & Acoustic Technologies, The MITRE Corporation
- Dr. Rockford Weitz, Professor of Practice and Director of Maritime Studies, The Fletcher School, Tufts University
- **Moderator:** Dr. Dan Kuchma, Professor, Civil and Environmental Engineering, Tufts University; Member, MOCEAN

11:15 AM SEEDING INNOVATION TO GROW NEW ENGLAND'S SUSTAINABLE TECHNOLOGY INDUSTRY

How has New England become a hub for sustainable technology, agriculture, forestry, the decarbonization of the building and construction sectors, electric vehicle infrastructure, energy grid modernization, and other rapidly expanding sectors of the green economy? This panel of experts will address this question and provide recommendations to unlock and accelerate sustainable tech — ultimately enhancing the region's and nation's economy and resilience.

Key questions to consider:

- How has sustainable tech become a major driver of economic growth in New England?
- How are partnerships among businesses, higher education, research institutions, and government helping unleash innovation in sustainable tech?
- What are emerging best practices and strategies for rapidly expanding the green economy?

Panelists:

- Ms. Lily Fitzgerald, Director, Center for Advanced Manufacturing, MassTech
- Dr. Rachael Floreani, Associate Professor, Department of Mechanical Engineering, University of Vermont
- Dr. David Kaplan, Stern Family Endowed Professor of Engineering, Tufts University and Director, Tufts University Center for Cellular Agriculture
- Dr. Julian David McClements, Distinguished Professor, University of Massachusetts Amherst
- Dr. Meghan McGill, Senior Associate, Breakthrough Energy Ventures
- **Moderator:** Dr. Matthew McNulty, Associate Director, Tufts University Center for Cellular Agriculture



12:00 PM LUNCH

12:45 PM LUNCH KEYNOTE

- Dr. Mark Peters, President and CEO, The MITRE Corporation

**1:00 PM UNLOCKING NEW ENGLAND'S ECONOMIC POTENTIAL —
COMMERCIALIZING FOR THE FUTURE**

How can next-generation innovations in the blue and green economies foster the new businesses and industries essential for creating the high-value jobs and resilient communities of tomorrow? This panel will examine the opportunities and challenges of commercializing new technologies in these two sectors, and it will highlight successful case studies, practices, and policies that can be expanded to drive the next wave of economic impact on land and sea.

Key questions to consider:

- What policies and best practices support the development of tech-based innovation in the region?
- What do investors, entrepreneurs, and other stakeholders (public and private) need to help de-risk investments and to accelerate innovation?
- What investments are needed to grow and strengthen the region's innovation ecosystem to accelerate the blue and green economies?

Panelists:

- Mr. Joseph Curtatone, President, The Alliance for Climate Transition
- Dr. Heather Darby, Agronomic and Soils Specialist, University of Vermont
- Mr. Garvan Donegan, Director, Planning, Innovation and Economic Development, Central Maine Growth Council
- Mr. Ben Linville-Engler, Deputy Director and Chief Investment Strategist, MassTech Collaborative
- Mr. Vinit Nijhawan, Managing Director, Mass Ventures
- Dr. Nichole Price, Director, Bigelow Center for Seafood Solutions
- **Moderator:** Mr. Martin Son, Senior Director, Technology Transfer and Industry Collaboration, Tufts University

**1:45 PM AFTERNOON KEYNOTE: FROM TRADITION TO TRANSFORMATION —
NEW BEDFORD'S BLUEPRINT FOR INNOVATION**

- The Hon. Jon Mitchell, Mayor of New Bedford, Massachusetts



2:00 PM **ACCELERATING INNOVATION — A STRATEGY FOR DEVELOPING CUTTING-EDGE TECHNOLOGIES**

Out innovating our global competitors in the blue and green economies — spanning maritime technology, shipbuilding, biotechnology, advanced energy production, etc.— is essential for the future of the United States, and New England is at the forefront of developing and commercializing the technologies that will shape the United States' global standing in the future. This panel brings together leaders from business, research, and academia to explore how the United States can unleash the innovation and commercialization necessary to firmly establish itself as the global technology leader.

Key questions to consider:

- Why is U.S. leadership in next-generation technology such an important competitiveness issue, and where is there a need for major innovation in the blue and green economies?
- What challenges must be overcome for America to be the global pacesetter in the research, development, and commercialization of new technologies?
- What strategies can ensure the U.S. remains a technological leader in sustainability for years to come?

Panelists:

- Dr. Bernard Arulanandam, Vice Provost, Research, Tufts University
- Mr. Blair Bateson, Senior Vice President, Net Zero Strategy, Bank of America
- Dr. Kirk Dombrowski, Vice President, Research and Economic Development, University of Vermont
- **Moderator:** Mr. Chad Evans, Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer, Council on Competitiveness

2:40 PM **BREAK**



3:00 PM

LINKING WORKFORCE, INNOVATION, AND INVESTMENT: THE BLUE ECONOMY AND BEYOND

New England's connection to its coast plays a vital role in the United States's global leadership in research, high-skilled employment, and innovation. By integrating New England's advanced technology, skilled workforce, and manufacturing capabilities within the blue and green economies—and aligning these assets with key sectors such as defense and energy—the region can attract greater public and private investment into blue and green-based industries. This panel will highlight examples of how the region can leverage its distinctive resources to grow investment, while also exploring opportunities to expand cross-sector partnerships that will propel the blue and green economies forward.

Panelists:

- Mr. Bruno Freitas, Principal, Lewis-Burke Associates
- Dr. Eric Hines, Professor of the Practice, Civil and Environmental Engineering and Kentaro Tsutsumi Faculty Fellow, Tufts University
- Dr. Anthony Kirincich, Senior Scientist, Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution
- **Moderator:** Dr. Barbara Kates-Garnick, Professor of the Practice, The Fletcher School, Tufts University

3:45 PM

FROM VISION TO ACTION: A LONG-TERM STRATEGY FOR PLACE- MAKING INNOVATION ACROSS NEW ENGLAND

The region and nation with the most efficient and sustainable economy will hold a competitive advantage over its rivals. This concluding panel will examine the path forward for New England to position itself as a leader in tomorrow's blue-green economy—as well lessons that can be shared to optimize the U.S. economy for a future in which sustainability and innovation will be increasingly linked.

Key questions to consider:

- Looking ahead, what are the most significant opportunities and challenges for New England's economic competitiveness over the next 25 years?
- How can government, industry, and academia collaborate effectively to drive innovation and promote sustainable economic practices in New England?
- What lessons can the rest of the country learn from New England's success and work in this space?



Panelists:

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- Dr. Sunil Kumar, President, Tufts University
- Dr. Marlene Tromp, President Designate, University of Vermont
- **Moderator:** The Hon. Deborah L. Wince-Smith, President and CEO, Council on Competitiveness

4:30 PM CONVERSATION CLOSE