

METAIAM Wins First Place at 2026 NYC Cross-Border US Startup Competition

Nine AI, life sciences and healthcare ventures recognized at event organized by NYU CSSA and CLSA

NEW YORK, NY, UNITED STATES, October 19, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Oct. 10, 2026 — METAIAM, a startup developing technology to verify that a real person is behind high-risk enterprise authorizations, won first place at the 2026 NYC Cross-Border US Startup Competition (NCUSC), held Oct. 10 at New York University's Vanderbilt Hall.

Organized by the New York University Chinese Students and Scholars Association (NYU CSSA) and the Chinese Legal and Social Advancement Association (CLSA), the competition convened entrepreneurs, investors, industry professionals and partner organizations. The program featured startup pitches, keynote addresses, a panel discussion and an awards ceremony.

Orbitour AI placed second, and Thread Bioscience and medara tied for third. Each of the four top teams also received an Excellence Award. The

teams were represented by David Tang, CCO of METAIAM; Zihao Zhang, co-founder and CEO of Orbitour AI; Craig Serio, CEO of Thread Bioscience; and Kendra Batchelder, Ph.D., founder and CEO of medara.



NCUSC 2026 winner group photo



Attendees follow the program at New York University's Vanderbilt Hall during the 2026 NYC Cross-Border US Startup Competition on Oct. 10.

The winning ventures span enterprise security, sales technology and healthcare. METAIAM's human-presence verification addresses the security risks that autonomous AI systems and deepfakes pose to high-stakes approvals. Orbitour AI pairs an AI sales assistant with interactive, photorealistic 3D representations of venues.

In healthcare, Thread Bioscience is developing CultureStat, a point-of-care bacterial testing platform for assessing urinary tract infections, and medara is building AI tools for breast cancer screening and risk assessment.

Five additional ventures — Aident AI, Qnity, SATORI, Haystack Medical and Miora Health — received Outstanding Project recognition, bringing the total number of recognized projects to nine. Aident AI connects AI agents with tools, accounts and data to support business workflows. Qnity is developing quantum-electrochemical sensors for molecular screening, and SATORI combines AI and synthetic biology to discover and produce bioingredients.

Haystack Medical is building a microneedle platform for inner-ear fluid sampling and targeted drug delivery. Miora Health combines at-home microbiome testing with AI to assess the risk of pregnancy complications during the first trimester.

CLSA President Yi Lee delivered opening remarks. Keynote speakers included Andreas Deutschmann, managing partner at InFound Equity and a former managing director at JPMorgan Chase, and Max Ren, a senior global media executive and the founder and CEO of Starr Holdings.

Ryan Zhang moderated the panel "From Innovation to Market," which featured Fannie Wang, vice president of investment at UpHonest Capital; Venkat Nelabhotla, president and CEO of Vyome Holdings Inc.; Srushti Katore, co-founder and chief operating officer of CARA Systems Inc.; and Chuck English, principal at English Ventures. The agenda also included an ATTENCITY Go-to-Market session and guest commentary.

Award presenters included Dan Zhang, vice president of Q Bay Center, and Michael Zhao, co-founder of Q Bay (Boston). The competition gave founders opportunities to connect with investors and industry participants.

About NCUSC

The NYC Cross-Border US Startup Competition (NCUSC) brings together entrepreneurs, investors and technology professionals to showcase emerging ventures and foster cross-border collaboration. Through project presentations, expert review and networking, the competition connects founders with industry resources and potential partners.

About NYU CSSA

The New York University Chinese Students and Scholars Association (NYU CSSA) serves students,

scholars and alumni in the greater New York area through cultural programs, social events and career development activities.

About CLSA

The Chinese Legal and Social Advancement Association (CLSA) connects professionals and entrepreneurs through legal education, career development programs and networking events, supporting knowledge exchange and collaboration across business and professional communities.

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ETB

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