J-NEXUS SHIKIHO
Quarterly Report (Issue 3)

August 2026 Consulate-General of Japan in Boston

Contents

1. 'Innovation Spotlight: Japan' Special Feature

- 'Innovation Spotlight: Japan' (Tim Ritchie, President, Museum of Science) P1
- Immunology Frontier Research Center (IFReC), The University of Osaka (Shimon Sakaguchi, Distinguished Honorary Professor) P2
- Returning to the Place That Changed My Life (Mai Uchida, Associate Professor, Harvard Medical School) P3
- US-Japan Collaboration in Space: From ISS to Artemis (Kenta Tsuchiya, Deputy Director, JAXA Washington, D.C. Office) P5
- Building bridges (Innovation through the lens of public health) (Takemi Program in International Health, Harvard T. H. Chan School of Public Health: Director Aya Goto, Takemi Fellows 2025-26 Isamu Amir, David Atomanyi Barnes) P6

2. Overview of the New England Economy and Innovation Ecosystem

- Why Boston, Why Now: Advancing Mitsubishi Electric's Digital Transformation Through Co-Creation (Anthony Vetro, President & CEO, Mitsubishi Electric Research Laboratories) P8
- Connecting Japan's University Ecosystem to Boston: The Challenge and Co-Creation of the NINEJP Boston Hub (Hidetoshi Tahara, Vice President (Start-up Ecosystems), Hiroshima University) P11
- Becoming a university where anyone in the world would like to join～Launching UTokyo College of Design (Teruo Fujii, President, The University of Tokyo) P13
- ENSEMBLExJ: Connecting Global Innovation with Patients in Japan (National Cancer Center Japan) P16
- Turning Encounters into Questions, and Innovation into Value (Tomomichi Amano, Assistant Professor of Business Administration, Harvard Business School) P19
- Building a Two-Way Innovation Bridge Between Japan and the United States (Alumni Ventures Japan) ... P21

3. Trends in Research, Development, and Innovation

- Y-JLS Forum: Connecting Japanese Life Science Researchers at Yale (Tomokazu Sumida, Neurology, Yale School of Medicine) P23

4. Other・Event Information

- Information on Japanese Researchers (PI List) P25
- Upcoming Events P26

1. 'Innovation Spotlight: Japan' Special Feature

□ 'Innovation Spotlight: Japan' (Tim Ritchie, President, Museum of Science)



The Museum of Science together with the Consulate-General of Japan in Boston was proud to host the inaugural 'Innovation Spotlight: Japan' on May 31, 2026, a daylong, museum-wide celebration focused on the science, research, and technologies shaping our future. More than a showcase of innovation, the day highlighted the power of international partnership, and scientific achievements to address the challenges and opportunities facing our world.

As science and technology increasingly shape every aspect of our lives, the Museum of Science strives to equip and inspire everyone to use science for the global good. Our mission is to inspire a lifelong love of learning in science in everyone, and our vision is to build a world where science belongs to each of us for the good of all of us.

'Innovation Spotlight: Japan' demonstrated the power of science diplomacy across fields ranging from space exploration and artificial intelligence to sustainable energy and advanced materials. We were delighted to welcome partners of both the Museum and the Consulate General of Japan in Boston, including JAXA, NEDO, AMED, Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health's Takemi Program in International Health, The Arnold Arboretum of Harvard University, MIT Media Lab, MIT Kagome Lattice, UConn, Canon , Fujikura ,NTT, Japan Airlines, Toray, IVS/Kyoto, 3D Architech ,Binnovative, OrigaMIT, ,

Visitors enjoyed a vibrant performance by Ryukyukoku Matsuri Daiko, followed by a keynote presentation from Japan Prize laureate Professor Cynthia Dwork, "There's Science for That! AI, Responsibility, and Choice." The day also featured two engaging "Meet the Scientist" sessions: one with Mr. Kenta Tsuchiya of the Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency (JAXA), who discussed U.S.-Japan collaboration on major space initiatives including Artemis; and another with Associate Professor Mai Uchida and Dr. Hidenori Tanaka, who explored the intersection of brain science and artificial intelligence.

We are deeply grateful to Consul General Seiichiro Takahashi and the Consulate General of Japan in Boston for the opportunity to partner and learn from each other, and for making this event possible. Together, we celebrated not only the achievements of today, but also the relationships, curiosity, and spirit of collaboration that will drive the breakthroughs of tomorrow. Science transcends borders, and our future will be built together.

□ Immunology Frontier Research Center (IFReC), The University of Osaka（Shimon Sakaguchi, Distinguished Honorary Professor）



In May 2026, the Museum of Science in Boston hosted‘Innovation Spotlight: Japan,’ an event highlighting Japanese science, technology, and innovation. I was honored to contribute a video message for the occasion.

Japan is making significant efforts to translate fundamental research into practical applications. At the same time, many of today's challenges are global in nature. Progress therefore depends on collaboration across disciplines and national borders, as well as on trust between science and society.

At IFReC, we are dedicated to understanding the immune system at a fundamental level and applying that knowledge to develop new approaches to the diagnosis and treatment of a wide range of immunological diseases and cancers.

My own research focuses on regulatory T cells, a specialized population of lymphocytes that suppress harmful immune responses such as autoimmune diseases and allergies.

The University of Osaka has a strong tradition in immunology that spans nearly a century. This tradition has been built over decades through fundamental research, clinical practice, and the education of scientists and physicians.

With this background in mind, I greatly value opportunities such as‘Innovation Spotlight: Japan.’ The event brought together researchers, educators, industry leaders, students, and members of the public to exchange perspectives and build new connections.

I hope that the conversations initiated through this event will continue to inspire dialogue, encourage collaboration, and help young people see how science and innovation can contribute to society.

□ Returning to the Place That Changed My Life（Mai Uchida, Associate Professor, Harvard Medical School）



Recently, I had the honor of giving a lecture at the Museum of Science in Boston as part of an event hosted by the Consulate General of Japan in Boston. I am also currently helping develop a new exhibit on how the brain generates and regulates emotions.

For me, the Museum of Science is much more than a museum.

When I was a high school student in Japan, I participated in a summer science program hosted by Smith College. During an excursion, we visited the Museum of Science. As a teenager fascinated by science, I remember walking through the exhibits and realizing, perhaps for the first time, that I wanted to devote my life to science and pursue a career in medicine.

Nearly thirty years later, I returned—not as a student visiting from overseas, but as a neuroscientist and psychiatrist working in Boston. To have the opportunity to share neuroscience and mental health with the next generation in the very place that inspired my own career feels like completing a remarkable circle.

In my lecture, I discussed how the brain generates emotions and how those emotions influence our behavior.

The basic structure of the human brain has changed remarkably little since our hunter-gatherer ancestors. Emotions evolved to rapidly evaluate whether something was favorable or unfavorable for survival and to trigger immediate action. While this system was highly adaptive in environments filled with predators and other life-threatening dangers, modern life presents a very different challenge. Instead of facing immediate threats to survival, we spend much of our lives navigating uncertainty, relationships, and complex decisions without clear right or wrong answers. As a result, emotional responses that once promoted short-term survival do not always lead to the best long-term outcomes.

Rather than suppressing emotions, I emphasized the importance of acknowledging them and asking ourselves, "What am I feeling?" and "Why am I feeling this way?" Reflecting on our emotions allows us to respond more thoughtfully instead of reacting automatically.

I also discussed how repeated experiences shape neural networks in the brain. When we repeatedly hear stereotypes about particular groups—whether based on gender, ethnicity, or mental illness—those messages become encoded into our neural pathways, often without our awareness. The same is true for the beliefs we hold about ourselves. Fortunately, the brain is remarkably plastic. By intentionally questioning our assumptions and engaging in reflective thinking, we can reshape these neural networks throughout life.

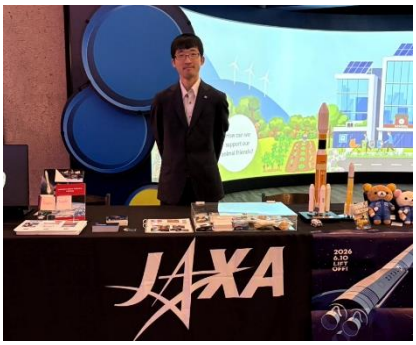
I shared my experiences advocating for COVID-19 vaccination during the pandemic. That experience taught me firsthand how misinformation and disinformation can spread faster than scientific evidence and directly affect people's health and decision-making. It reinforced my belief that advancing scientific research is only

half of our responsibility; communicating that science clearly, accurately, and compassionately to the public is equally essential.

Standing once again in the Museum of Science, this time as a speaker rather than an inspired teenager, reminded me why I became a scientist in the first place. If my work can help even one young person discover the excitement of science, then I will feel that I have come full circle.

Just as I did thirty years ago, I still love science. And I still believe that science has the power to change lives.

□ US-Japan Collaboration in Space: From ISS to Artemis (Kenta Tsuchiya, Deputy Director, JAXA Washington, D.C. Office)



The Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency (JAXA) is a national research and development agency that consistently conducts basic research through to development and utilization in the aerospace field. As the representative in North America region, the Washington D.C. Office promotes cooperation with agencies such as NASA (National Aeronautics and Space Administration) and NOAA (National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration), as well as conducting policy and trend surveys of the White House, Congress, and aerospace-related companies. Public relations and industry promotion activities are also within its scope.

Our office sees Boston and New England as important regions. In the 1960s, the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) was responsible for developing the Apollo spacecraft's guidance and navigation system (Apollo Guidance Computer (AGC), making the region a key hub for space exploration. Currently, it is also attracting attention as an innovation hub combining AI and robotics with space development, centered on research institutions such as Harvard University and MIT, and we are closely monitoring these trends. Additionally, we serve as judges at the Boston regional competition of the NASA International Space Apps Challenge, an international app and IoT hackathon.

I participated in 'Innovation Spotlight: Japan' held at the Boston Museum of Science on May 31, 2026 at the invitation of the Consulate General in Boston. Along with a booth exhibition introducing JAXA's activities, I gave a lecture titled "Collaboration in Space: From ISS to Artemis." My main message was that the history of various forms of U.S.-Japan space cooperation, including the ISS, leads to today's collaboration in the Artemis program. It was very memorable that many children listened to my lecture until the end and even asked me questions. That made me realize once again that space has a universal appeal that attracts everyone.

JAXA's space exploration missions in the coming years include "MMX," which will collect samples from the Martian moon Phobos; "LUPEX," which will conduct water resource surveys at the lunar south pole; and "Pressurized Rover", which will allow astronauts to travel and explore while living on the lunar surface. All these missions leverage the technology that JAXA has developed and improved to date, but at the same time, cooperation with international partners such as NASA is essential for maximizing mission outcomes. Once I step beyond Washington D.C., I feel that JAXA's activities are still not well known, and there is room to promote further international cooperation through public relations and outreach. Our office will continue to show our presence not only in the Boston area but also across the United States.

□ Building bridges (Innovation through the lens of public health) (Takemi Program in International Health, Harvard T. H. Chan School of Public Health: Aya Goto, Director, Isamu Amir, Takemi Fellow 2025–26; David Atomanyi Barnes, Takemi Fellow 2025–26)

1. Introduction

On May 31, 2026, the Takemi Program in International Health at Harvard T. H. Chan School of Public Health participated in the 'Innovation Spotlight: Japan' exhibition at the Museum of Science. We presented "Heartbeats and Health," measuring heartbeats by touching wrists. We explained the measured heart rates not only for human health but also for "One Health." More than 40 people visited our booth, where participants enjoyed measuring their heartbeats and exploring new concepts in personal health. Through the theme of "building bridges" between human and animal health, we encouraged young people to think more broadly about innovation and the interconnectedness of health across disciplines.

2. Japan and other countries (academic exchange)

For over four decades, the Takemi program has been a cornerstone of international research in public and global health. Since 1983, 337 fellows from 63 countries have participated in the program. Our mid-career fellows advance their original research and pioneer new research fields during the program. Their endeavors continue after the program ends, and they build bridges among institutions, countries, researchers, health practitioners, policy stakeholders, and citizens through their research domestically and internationally. These commitments serve as global, academic, and human exchanges.

3. Takemi Fellows and next generation (health education)

A primary objective of our exhibition was to engage younger generations in the fundamentals of health literacy. Some visitors, including youth, measured their heartbeats for the first time, a practical way to learn about their body functions. We asked participants to place a sticker on the bell-curve model to share their measured heart rates and explained average human heart rates, part of health education and knowledge transfer for the next generation. Such self-awareness of their health could facilitate a positive chain by sharing the information with their friends, families, and communities.

4. Human, animal, and environmental health (One Health)

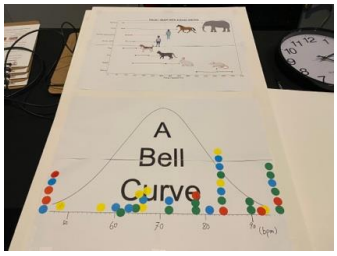
We also introduced the children to the One Health concept through a comparison of heart rates across humans and different animal species, including elephants, horses, dogs, cats, rabbits, and mice. As the young people compared the animals, one excitedly asked, "Does that mean animals' hearts work like ours too?" That simple question became a bridge between curiosity and understanding, allowing us to explain that, despite differences in size and physiology, humans and animals share many biological processes and are connected through the health of the environment. From there, we discussed how diseases can spread between animals and people, and why physicians, veterinarians, environmental scientists, and public health

professionals must work together to protect health. By building this bridge between science and everyday understanding, we empowered these young ones to see themselves not just as learners, but as active participants in promoting personal health within their families, schools, and communities. Nurturing this awareness from an early age helps cultivate a generation that values collaboration, prevention, and shared responsibility for protecting the health of people, animals, and the environment.

5. Conclusion

An academic platform can do more than train the researchers and professionals it directly supports. It can also create a broader educational bridge by encouraging those researchers and professionals to share their knowledge with younger generations. In this way, public health education can follow a "roof–tile" model of learning, in which each generation supports and teaches the next. Through this chain of learning, the Takemi Program can contribute not only to the development of current Fellows, but also to the education and empowerment of future generations who will carry public health and One Health perspectives forward.








Far left: The exhibition of "Heartbeats and Health" from Takemi Program in International Health

Second left: Results of measured heartbeats stickers by visitors and a chart of heartbeats among animals

Second right: A Takemi fellow (veterinarian) explaining "One health" to a researcher

Far right: The other Takemi fellow (former science teacher) showing "One health" to youth visitors

2. Overview of the New England Economy and Innovation Ecosystem

□ Why Boston, Why Now: Advancing Mitsubishi Electric's Digital Transformation Through Co-Creation (Anthony Vetro, President & CEO, Mitsubishi Electric Research Laboratories)



On June 4, Mitsubishi Electric marked an important milestone with the launch of Serendie Street Boston in Kendall Square. The opening represented more than the introduction of a new innovation hub; it signaled a broader step in the company's transformation toward software, artificial intelligence, data-driven services, and co-created digital solutions.

Mitsubishi Electric has long been recognized for world-class hardware, systems, and engineering. Its products operate in the physical world – in buildings, factories, transportation networks, energy infrastructure, homes, and cities. Increasingly, those systems also generate valuable data that can be used to improve performance, increase efficiency, predict failures, automate decisions, and create new services. The opportunity ahead is to connect Mitsubishi Electric's deep engineering heritage with the digital intelligence required to address today's complex business and societal challenges.

That is the purpose of Serendie Street Boston.

Serendie Street Boston is Mitsubishi Electric's U.S. hub for software, AI, and digital transformation. It is designed as a place where research, product development, software engineering, user experience, business creation, and external collaboration can come together. The name "Serendie" combines the ideas of serendipity and digital engineering, reflecting the intent to bring together people, technologies, data, and real-world problems in ways that lead to unexpected discoveries and practical outcomes.

The hub is part of Mitsubishi Electric's global Serendie co-creation initiative and brings the company's Circular Digital-Engineering vision to the U.S. market. In practice, this means using data and digital technology to continuously learn from deployed systems, improve solutions, and create new value for customers and society. Serendie Street Boston is intended to accelerate that cycle by enabling teams to identify opportunities, test ideas quickly, pilot them in real environments, and scale what works.

The choice of the East Coast, and Greater Boston in particular, is highly strategic. Greater Boston is one of the world's most concentrated innovation ecosystems. Within a short distance are leading universities, research hospitals, robotics organizations, AI and software startups, venture-backed companies, global corporations, and a deep pool of technical talent. For a company seeking to move faster, this region provides an exceptional environment for collaboration.

Boston is also not a new location for Mitsubishi Electric. Mitsubishi Electric Research Laboratories (MERL) has been part of the Cambridge innovation community for more than three decades. MERL has strong

research capabilities in areas such as artificial intelligence, signal processing, control, optimization, robotics, and multi-physics modeling. That long-standing research foundation gives Serendie Street Boston a unique advantage: it places the new hub close to advanced research while focusing on the translation of ideas into deployable solutions.

This connection between long-range research and near-term impact is central to the initiative. MERL often explores technologies that may be years ahead of commercial deployment. Serendie Street Boston creates a stronger pathway for those ideas to move toward customers, partners, and new businesses. At the same time, the hub gives researchers greater visibility into real-world needs, operational constraints, and emerging market opportunities. That feedback loop can help sharpen research priorities and ensure that innovation remains grounded in meaningful problems.

The timing is also important. AI is changing expectations across nearly every industry. Customers increasingly want systems that are not only reliable and efficient, but also adaptive, intelligent, connected, and easy to integrate into broader digital workflows. This is true in Mitsubishi Electric's core businesses, including energy, manufacturing, building systems, mobility, and infrastructure, and it is also true in emerging domains where the company can create new value.

A key question for any global technology company is how to develop these capabilities at scale. One approach is to build software and AI expertise separately within each business unit. That can address specific needs, but it can also create silos. Serendie Street Boston offers another model: concentrating talent, tools, methods, and partnerships in a way that can support many business domains. By combining domain expertise from Mitsubishi Electric's business groups with shared digital capabilities, the company can move more quickly and build solutions that are both technically strong and commercially relevant.

Co-creation is central to this approach. Innovation today rarely happens in isolation. It requires customers who can define urgent problems, startups that bring speed and new perspectives, academic researchers who push the boundaries of knowledge, and internal teams that understand our technologies and markets. Serendie Street Boston is designed to bring these communities together in a hands-on environment where teams can prototype, test, iterate, and learn.

The opening of Serendie Street Boston is therefore not simply about expanding Mitsubishi Electric's footprint in Cambridge. It is about expanding the way the company innovates. It creates a place where digital engineering and serendipity can meet; where advanced research can become practical solutions; where global expertise can connect with local talent; and where Mitsubishi Electric can help shape the next generation of intelligent systems and services.



For Mitsubishi Electric, the East Coast and Greater Boston offer the right environment for this next chapter. The region provides access to world-class talent, leading research institutions, startups, partners, and customers eager to solve difficult problems. Serendie Street Boston gives the company a

new platform to do exactly that: a launchpad for digital growth in the U.S., a catalyst for co-creation, and an important milestone in Mitsubishi Electric's transformation.

As Mitsubishi Electric embarks on this new journey, we are grateful for the support of the Consulate-General of Japan in Boston. Its encouragement and engagement reflect the strong ties between Japan and the Greater Boston innovation community, and we look forward to contributing to that relationship through collaboration, technology, and shared progress.

□ Connecting Japan's University Ecosystem to Boston: The Challenge and Co-Creation of the NINEJP Boston Hub (Hidetoshi Tahara, Vice President (Start-up Ecosystems), Hiroshima University)

1. Introduction: Entering Boston, a World-Leading Hub of Innovation



Fig. 1 The CIC Cambridge Building (One Broadway), home to the NINEJP Boston Hub

In early 2026, as part of the Japan Science and Technology Agency's (JST) National Innovation Network for Entrepreneur Japan (NINEJP) program to build a nationwide network, Hiroshima University established a new international implementation base — the NINEJP Boston Hub — at CIC Cambridge in Cambridge, Massachusetts, representing Japan's university innovation ecosystem.

The Boston-Cambridge area is a global center of innovation, home not only to world-leading universities such as MIT and Harvard, but also to one of the world's largest life-science and deep-tech clusters — epitomized by Kendall Square — all concentrated at extremely high density within walking distance of one another. This is a place where shared spaces such as CIC and Venture Café generate everyday serendipity, where faculty and student entrepreneurship has become commonplace, and where a culture that embraces failure and pivoting as positive steps has taken root. Moreover, the region's robust network of trust — in which investors with scientific backgrounds rigorously vet the underlying science before making investment decisions — is of critical importance in connecting Japan's excellent technology seeds to the world and translating them into real-world impact.

2. Activities of the NINEJP Boston Hub: An Agile Bridge Between Japan and the United States

The NINEJP Boston Hub (11th floor, One Broadway) is more than a single university's overseas office — it functions as the on-the-ground implementation window for the broader "Japanese university ecosystem," connecting universities and research institutions from across Japan.

To keep the operational burden and risk on the university itself to a minimum while maintaining agility, the Hub operates on a part-time collaborative model staffed by 5 highly specialized, locally based members. Using digital tools such as Slack and Zoom, the Hub and its team in Japan (Hiroshima University's Startup Promotion Division) share information with the local team in real time, forming an agile operating structure. As a result, it is able to respond quickly to local intelligence and visit-coordination requests alike.

At present, the Hub's priority activities are: (1) networking with local VCs, pharmaceutical companies, and universities; (2) supporting visiting researchers and entrepreneurs from Japan — including agenda-building and guided tours of CIC; and (3) timely cataloguing of local contacts and information, with feedback provided back to Japan.

As a concrete showcase of these efforts, the Hub will hold its flagship event at CIC Cambridge on **September 15–17, 2026: "NINEJP Japan Innovation Hub 2026 in Boston (Cambridge)"** bringing together a curated delegation of Japanese drug-discovery and deep-tech startups. On the final day, September 17, the event will link seamlessly with the region's largest community event, "Thursday Gathering," combining a pitch session for Japanese startups with a joint poster session in which researcher-entrepreneurs present their own research seeds directly to the local ecosystem — showcasing the full depth of Japan's innovation capacity, from research seeds to startups, across multiple layers.

3. Looking Ahead: From Hiroshima to the World — Harmonizing Peace and Innovation

Hiroshima University is currently focused on building the "PSI (Peace & Science Innovation) Ecosystem," an initiative to accelerate regional revitalization and the creation of deep-tech ventures. PSI's vision extends beyond economic success alone: it is a commitment to "solving global challenges while pursuing peace."

The NINEJP Boston Hub stands at the front line of putting this PSI vision into practice on a global scale, serving as the proving ground where it happens. It brings back to Japan's regional university ecosystems the culture Boston embodies — where the community and its universities come together to celebrate every challenge — while at the same time delivering Japan's world-class science and technology to the world via Boston. By continuing to embody this agile, two-way circulation of international talent and ideas, the Hub will help open a future of robust joint innovation between Japan and the United States.

□ Becoming a university where anyone in the world would like to join～Launching UTokyo College of Design（Teruo Fujii, President, The University of Tokyo）



< UTokyo College of Design – Concept>

The University of Tokyo will launch UTokyo College of Design (UTokyo Design, below) , which is its first new faculty in almost 70 years, in fall 2027. UTokyo celebrates its 150th anniversary in 2027, and this initiative aims to present a new educational program to realize the three core values, "Dialogue", "Diversity & Inclusion", and "A university for everyone in the world", to the world.

What is the "Design" in UTokyo Design? It is not only so-called Aesthetic Design but also design in a much broader sense such as required in all the social systems, laws, policies, healthcare, education, and even business and services, etc. Currently, humanity faces different types of issues on a global scale like climate change, biodiversity loss, and social division, poverty, aging society, etc. All of these issues cannot be solved by knowledge from a single discipline, and it is necessary to weave together knowledge and methodologies from different academic areas, and the capacity to integrate them in an interdisciplinary and feasible manner--i.e., "Design"--is required (Fig.1). In order to engage in solving these kinds of issues, it is indispensable to have diverse perspectives, including a global view besides interdisciplinarity in learning. UTokyo Design is "designed" to become a place where anyone in the world would like to join for interdisciplinary and international education and learning.

In UTokyo Design, a five-year Bachelor-Master integrated program is offered, which was newly approved by the government in July 2026. All the classes are English medium and students enroll in the fall semester to become compatible with other areas of the world. Each cohort is composed of 100 students, half from Japan and another half from around the world. They all live in the same dormitory, Mejiro-dai International Village close to our Hongo campus (Fig.2).

<Proactive and Individually Optimized Learning (Fig.3)>

Students will learn in their first year how our society is formed, and how our planet and universe are understood, through "Interdisciplinary Foundations," consisting of lectures from Law, Politics, Economics to Science, Engineering, Medicine, etc., learning overviews of all of UTokyo's wide variety of academic knowledge. They also will learn an overview of different types of design methodologies (8 Track Design Series). Both are mandatory classes.

From the second year, students will select subjects depending on their own interest and curiosity from the five pillars of Interdisciplinary Perspectives (IP), "Environment & Sustainability", "Technology Frontiers & AI", "Governance & Markets", "Healthcare & Well-being" and "Culture & Society", shown in the figure. It is expected that they will build up their own curricula individually, depending on the projects they will be engaged in, and a different structure of knowledge will be formed for each of the students. In addition to IP, students will be engaged in the Change Maker Design Project, which is not simply a research project, but is supposed to be a design project for social challenges to make changes in collaboration with business or

public sectors. Students will experience collaborative work as a team while they proceed with their learning individually.

<Collaborative Learning with Society>

Students will work on the Change Maker Design Project mainly in the Studio to be built on the UTokyo Design campus (Fig.4). Different types of professionals and staff from business and public sectors will come in to have discussions and to give small lectures from time to time. Students can learn and polish their ideas for the projects through such interactions, participating in several projects in their second and third year. As what they can learn in a classroom is somewhat limited, it is important to proceed with their projects in wider collaboration with society.

Another notable feature of UTokyo Design's five-year integrated program is an internship of at least six months and up to one year, which is required in the fourth year. Students will have off-campus work experience through this long-term internship in companies, international organizations, etc. (*1), with which we set up agreements. Through this work experience, students can understand what work is and feel how the world moves. As the motto of UTokyo Design is "See the World through Design. Then Change It.", we made this internship to "See the World" mandatory.

Why do we need to expand the area of contact with society? That is because there are so many questions and issues in society for which it is not so easy to find solutions, and it is indispensable for students at UTokyo Design to learn from such questions and issues in society. So far there has been a clear boundary between education and work, where the university educates students and the graduates are handed over to industry. By contrast, with the declining population in Japan especially, the idea that universities and society are together fostering next generation talents is becoming more and more important, recently. For example, in Keidanren's "Industry-academia meeting on PhD holders", university representatives from national, public and private schools and executives from Keidanren discussed for two years on how to nurture PhD holders and enable them to excel in society, and released a report in February 2026, where it is said "Fostering talent cannot be completed solely by universities or by industry. In order to strengthen the knowledge foundation of the whole society and to achieve sustainable development of industry and local communities, universities and industry should work together to make it possible for students to go back and forth between learning and practice."

<In Closing>

Based on the above-mentioned considerations, we would like to make UTokyo Design a learning place open to outside of the university, and to let students have more interaction with social practice. We would like to realize design learning from diverse and practical viewpoints, by setting up an international environment consisting of students from Japan and from around the world, as well as rich opportunities for students to experience practical work at companies and/or public organizations.

Currently, there are a few important initiatives in higher education institutions around the world to realize such interdisciplinary education as described in this article. Well-known examples in the US would be Cornell Tech in New York City (*3), the Schwarzman College of Computing (*4) at MIT, and the College of Computing, Data Science and Society at UC Berkeley (*5). UTokyo Design, too, is to make an international place for

learning as a new approach in higher education, so that the University of Tokyo can truly become a university where anyone in the world would like to join, and we would like to attract anyone, not only from the East Coast, but also from around the world.

Footnotes:

*1 https://design.adm.u-tokyo.ac.jp/jp/program/off-campus-experience/organizations/

*2 https://www.keidanren.or.jp/policy/2026/004.html

*3 https://tech.cornell.edu

*4 https://computing.mit.edu

*5 https://cdss.berkeley.edu

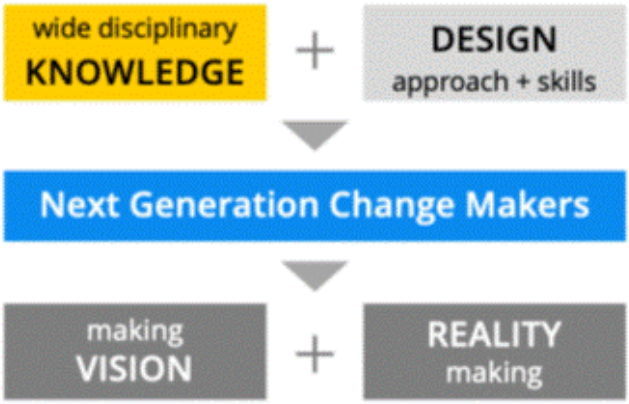


Fig.1 Pushing the boundaries of design at UTokyo Design



Fig.2 Mejiro-dai International Village

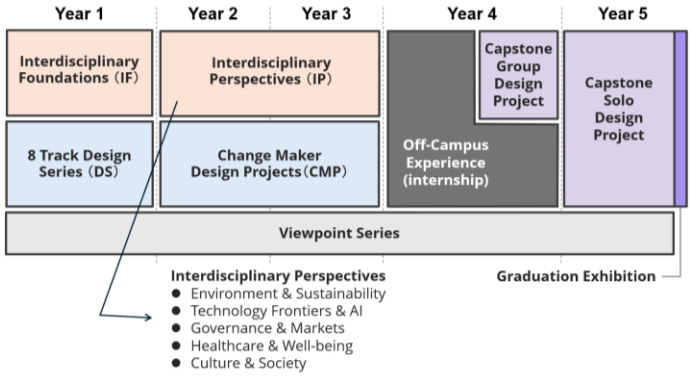


Fig.3 Overview of UTokyo Design Curriculum

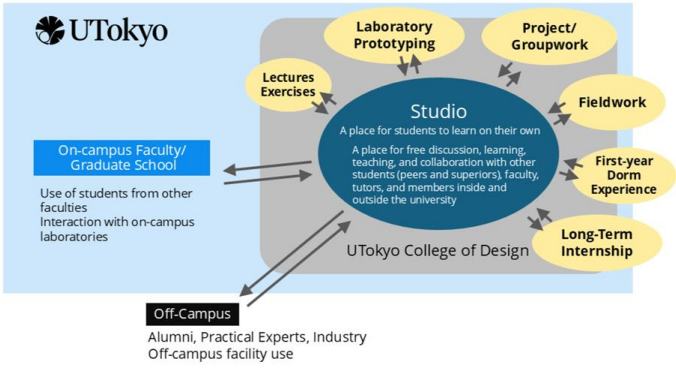


Fig.4 Collaborative Learning with Society in Studio

□ ENSEMBLExJ: Connecting Global Innovation with Patients in Japan（National Cancer Center Japan）

Breakthrough therapies are emerging from biotechnology companies, academic spinouts, and research institutions around the world. Ensuring that patients in Japan can benefit from these advances requires that Japan be considered early—not only as a future market, but also as a partner in global clinical development.

ENSEMBLExJ—short for Empowered National Synergy for Medical Biotech Landscape Expansion across Japan—is a national project supported by Japan's Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare (MHLW). Through close collaboration among Japan's six National Centers, the platform supports overseas innovators across a broad range of disease areas.

The platform's mission is to help promising medicines and advanced therapeutic technologies developed overseas establish an appropriate pathway toward clinical development in Japan, while strengthening Japan's contribution to global drug development.

A Gateway to Japan's Development Ecosystem

Japan offers a sophisticated healthcare system, experienced investigators, specialized medical institutions, and strong clinical research capabilities. Yet, for companies without an established presence in Japan, determining how and when to incorporate Japan into a global development plan can be challenging.

ENSEMBLExJ works through dialogue with each company to understand its technology, development priorities, and specific needs for Japan. Based on these discussions, the platform develops tailored support and practical proposals, drawing on relevant clinical, regulatory, operational, and partnership expertise.

Rather than applying a uniform model, ENSEMBLExJ helps companies identify the most appropriate next steps—whether this involves refining a clinical development strategy, assessing the feasibility of international clinical trials, identifying potential investigators and sites, considering regulatory or manufacturing issues, or connecting with appropriate development / business partners.

An Ensemble of Expertise

The name "ENSEMBLExJ" reflects the idea that successful development requires diverse expertise working together.

Bringing innovative therapy to patients requires more than strong science. It also requires unmet medical/patient needs matching, clinical insight, market analysis, regulatory strategy, trial operations, manufacturing and quality expertise, business development, financing, and long-term planning for patient access.

ENSEMBLExJ works closely with experts and partner organizations across this development ecosystem. By connecting companies with relevant specialists, institutions, Contract Research Organizations (CRO), Contract Development and Manufacturing Organizations (CDMO), pharmaceutical companies, and other stakeholders, the platform can provide multidimensional support tailored to each product, therapeutic area, and stage of development.

ENSEMBLExJ also works closely with the Pharmaceuticals and Medical Devices Agency (PMDA), including the PMDA Washington, D.C. Office. This collaboration enables regulatory perspectives to be incorporated into the platform's support and proposals, helping overseas companies address regulatory considerations that may otherwise be perceived as barriers and turn them into practical opportunities to strengthen their development plans for Japan.

The platform does not replace existing commercial relationships or contractual arrangements. Instead, it complements them by helping companies identify the right expertise, establish appropriate connections, and build a more informed strategy for Japan.

Engaging the Boston Life Sciences Community

In June 2026, ENSEMBLExJ held an event through CIC Boston to introduce the platform and discuss opportunities for global drug development in Japan.

Boston and Cambridge are among the world's leading life sciences hubs, bringing together biotechnology companies, pharmaceutical companies, academic institutions, investors, and entrepreneurs. Many innovations emerging from this ecosystem are designed from the outset with global development in mind.

Held in collaboration with the PMDA Washington, D.C. Office, the event introduced both the support available through ENSEMBLExJ and key aspects of Japan's regulatory environment. Discussions covered Japan's clinical development landscape, opportunities for international clinical trials, collaboration with specialized medical institutions, and considerations for companies seeking to include Japan in global development programs.

The event highlighted Japan's potential role not only as a future commercial market, but also as a strategic development partner. Its experienced investigators, specialized medical centers, and strong clinical research infrastructure can contribute meaningfully to international development programs.

Building Bridges for Patients and Your Business Expansion

ENSEMBLExJ creates practical connections between global innovators and Japan's healthcare and development ecosystem.

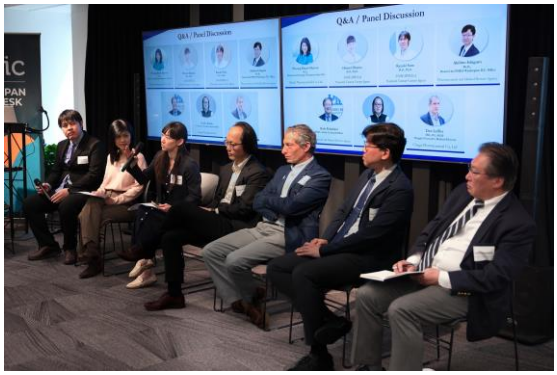
By helping overseas companies understand the Japanese landscape, identify relevant partners, and consider Japan early in global planning, the platform aims to support the development of promising therapies for patients in Japan.

Through continued engagement with innovation hubs such as Boston and collaboration across Japan's clinical development ecosystem, ENSEMBLExJ will continue to connect companies, researchers, healthcare institutions, and development partners across borders.

Its ultimate goal is simple: to help ensure that innovative therapies developed around the world can reach patients in Japan, while enabling Japan to contribute to the development of the next generation of medicines.

Please feel free to contact us at any time if you are interested.

Web page : https://ensemblexj.jp
Email : ensemblexj@ml.res.ncc.go.jp



ENSEMBLE
Empowered National Synergy
for Medical Biotech Landscape Expansion across Japan

□ Turning Encounters into Questions, and Innovation into Value（Tomomichi Amano, Assistant Professor of Business Administration, Harvard Business School）



It has been nearly twenty years since I first came to Boston as an undergraduate. As a student, I had time both for lively conversations with friends and for quiet reflection on my own. Today, as a researcher, I continue a similar cycle: I take questions and insights gained through seminars, classrooms, and conversations with companies in both Japan and the United States, develop them through writing and models, and bring them back into dialogue with others.

For me, the appeal of Boston and the broader New England region lies not only in the opportunity to encounter new ideas and people with diverse perspectives, but also in the space it affords to step back from those encounters, reflect, and return to conversation with new questions. What I value is this breathing room to move back and forth between engagement and reflection.

This movement between dialogue and reflection also echoes a central question in my research on the diffusion of innovation. The value of an innovation is not realized at the moment it is invented. Only after a new technology or idea becomes known, is adopted, is integrated into organizations' daily work, and continues to be used can its potential be realized as social and economic value. Just as an encounter alone does not grow into a meaningful relationship, an innovation does not create value simply because it has been developed.

Drawing on economics and marketing, I study a simple question: Why is the same product or idea embraced by some people and organizations but not by others? For example, my research on retail stores finds that the subsequent spread of a new product can vary depending on where it is first introduced and which manager oversees its implementation. Even products with comparable appeal can fare very differently depending on how they are managed locally and how staff engage with consumers. The same broad question runs through my other research, including work on how policy shapes the adoption of more energy-efficient products, and how game design affects engagement and continued use.

One role of social science is to help us understand the process that connects invention to value creation. Boston is home not only to inventors, but also to people who study the conditions under which technologies and products take hold in society and create lasting value. As we think about strengthening ties between Japan and Boston, part of the opportunity may lie not simply in facilitating exchange, but in creating a two-way cycle of inquiry and learning that helps us better understand how innovation becomes valuable in practice.

There is already a rich web of exchange between Japan and New England, connecting companies, researchers, students, and the institutions that support them. What matters is not simply increasing the number of connections, but carrying the questions they generate into experimentation and value creation. Exchange

need not end with observation alone. We can ask what questions we carry forward, what barriers stand in the way of adoption and implementation, what we can test on a small scale, and how what we learn can inform the next conversation.

This cycle can run in both directions: not only by testing ideas from Boston in Japan, but also by bringing questions that emerge from Japanese practice back to Boston. Familiar forms of exchange, from the trading of meishi to discussions of best practices, become more valuable when the questions and lessons they generate are carried into the next round of experimentation. In this way, individual encounters can become part of an ongoing process of learning and value creation rather than remaining isolated events.

This exchange has been sustained by the efforts of many people and institutions in both Boston and Japan, including the Consulate-General of Japan in Boston. I hope J-NEXUS will continue to serve not only as a platform for sharing achievements and activities, but also as a place where questions sparked by new encounters, and the experiments that follow from them, can be brought back and explored together.

If you have a question that could be explored through collaboration between Japan and Boston, or a challenge with no clear answer, perhaps a good place to begin is by bringing it into this cycle of exchange. For my part, I hope to continue working with business leaders and fellow researchers to pursue such questions in real-world settings.

□ Building a Two-Way Innovation Bridge Between Japan and the United States Turning Encounters into Questions, and Innovation into Value（Alumni Ventures）

Japan has long been a source of world-class science, engineering, and technological innovation. Its universities and research institutions produce globally significant discoveries, while its leading corporations have deep technical capabilities and global reach. Yet translating those strengths into venture-backed companies that can scale internationally has often required stronger connections to global capital, customers, talent, and commercialization networks.

Alumni Ventures launched the **Japan + US Bridge Fund** in 2026 to help strengthen those connections. The Fund is designed to create a durable, two-way pathway between the innovation ecosystems of Japan and the United States.

The model works in both directions.

From Japan to the world: "Go Global." Alumni Ventures seeks promising Japanese companies with strong technology and scientific foundations and helps connect them to U.S. and global investors, customers, talent, and strategic partners. This is particularly relevant in sectors where Japan has substantial research and industrial strengths, including life sciences, artificial intelligence, quantum computing, and other areas of deep technology.

From the United States to Japan: "Go Japan." At the same time, Alumni Ventures can draw from its broad U.S. venture network to identify companies interested in entering the Asian and Japanese markets. The goal is not simply to provide capital, but to help companies find the elements required to succeed locally: first customers, commercialization partners, localization support, and long-term strategic relationships.

This approach reflects a simple belief: **the best bridge is not one-way.**

The Japan + US Bridge Fund held its first close in March 2026, with **KDDI** and **UTokyo IPC**, the University of Tokyo's innovation and commercialization platform, among its foundational partners. These relationships are intended to go beyond investment capital by connecting entrepreneurs and researchers with corporations, investors, and other parts of the innovation ecosystem.

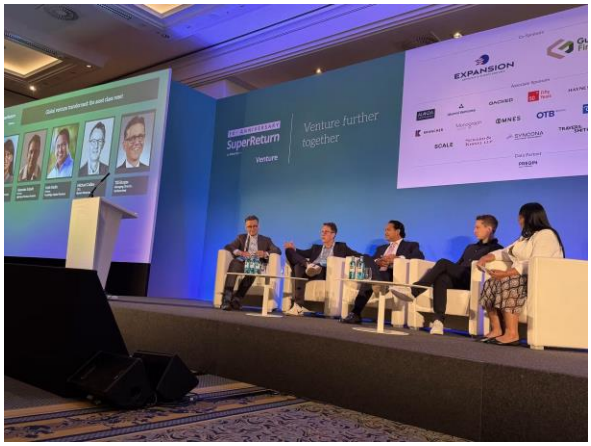
The Fund has already begun putting this strategy into practice. In June 2026, Alumni Ventures made its first investment in Japan in **Yaqumo**, a Tokyo-based quantum computing company developing neutral-atom hardware. In July 2026, Alumni Ventures made its second investment in RegCell, a company commercializing breakthrough science by Dr. Shimon Sakaguchi, winner of the 2025 Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine. Alumni Ventures has also expanded its permanent presence in Japan through its local organization and Tokyo office, reflecting a long-term commitment.

This effort has particular relevance to **J-NEXUS and the New England ecosystem**. Boston and the surrounding region combine extraordinary strengths in life sciences, AI, quantum technology, advanced engineering, and university research. Japan has complementary scientific and industrial capabilities. Creating more direct connections among researchers, founders, corporations, and investors on both sides can help promising technologies move more quickly from the laboratory to companies, and from companies to global markets.

Alumni Ventures looks forward to working with the J-NEXUS community to identify promising Japanese startups and research-driven companies, connect U.S. technologies with potential partners in Japan, and create more opportunities for entrepreneurs, universities, corporations, and investors to collaborate across the Pacific.

To learn more about Alumni Ventures initiatives connecting Japan and the US, please contact ryan.nakata@av.vc, General Manager, Alumni Ventures Japan KK.





3. Trends in Research, Development, and Innovation

□ Y-JLS Forum: Connecting Japanese Life Science Researchers at Yale (Tomokazu Sumida, Neurology, Yale School of Medicine)

A key question for any glo

The Y-JLS Forum (Yale Japanese Life Science Forum) is a community of Japanese researchers and students working primarily in the life sciences and medicine at Yale University and in the greater New Haven area. Its goal is simple: to bring people together across laboratories, departments, disciplines, and career stages, and to make both research and life at Yale a little richer through these connections. Today, our Facebook community has approximately 60 members.

Yale is home to Japanese researchers working in a remarkably broad range of fields, including immunology, neuroscience, cancer biology, genetics, and computational biology. However, researchers in different laboratories or departments may rarely have a chance to meet, even when they work in neighboring buildings. Our members also represent very different career stages, from graduate students and postdoctoral fellows to physicians and faculty members. The Y-JLS Forum was created to provide an informal setting where these boundaries matter less and people can simply meet and talk.

A central activity of the Forum is our regular research gathering. At each meeting, one member presents their current research, followed by an informal discussion over dinner and drinks. Rather than functioning as a formal seminar series where only completed work is presented, we encourage speakers to share ongoing projects and new findings that are still taking shape. This often leads to questions and ideas from researchers who approach the problem from very different perspectives.

In July 2026, we held our 10th research gathering. Kentaro Suina from the Department of Neurosurgery at Yale School of Medicine presented his work on the cancer biology of extrachromosomal DNA (ecDNA), combining computational analysis with microscopy-based screening. He generously shared new findings from an ongoing project that was still being prepared for publication. The presentation was followed by a lively discussion among participants from different scientific backgrounds.

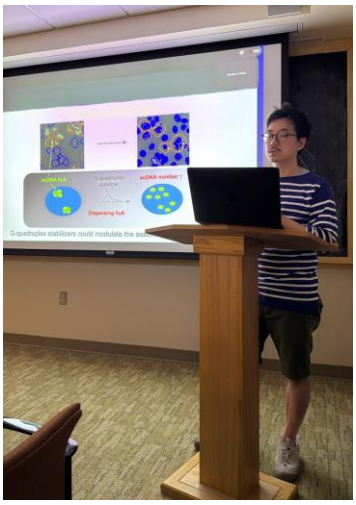


Photo 1: A scene from the research presentation meeting, with Mr. Kentaro Suina

The value of the Forum extends beyond scientific discussion. Members exchange practical information about experimental approaches and the research environment at Yale, but conversations also naturally extend to career development, differences between research in Japan and the United States, and everyday life in New Haven. For researchers who have recently arrived at Yale, having an opportunity to speak informally with Japanese

colleagues who have already navigated some of these experiences can be particularly helpful.

Our network has also gradually created opportunities to connect Yale with visitors from Japan. One recent example was a visit by a group of Japanese elementary school students participating in an Ivy League study tour in the summer of 2026. Japanese researchers at Yale volunteered to introduce their research, talk about studying and working abroad, and answer questions from the students. Sharing our experiences with a younger generation is another activity that has naturally grown out of the community.

Working abroad reminds us that a research career is shaped not only by experiments and publications but also by the people we meet along the way. We hope the Y-JLS Forum will continue to be an open and informal community where researchers can connect across disciplines and generations, and where newcomers to Yale can easily find colleagues and friends. We also hope that these connections will eventually lead to new collaborations and help build another small bridge between Yale and Japan.



Photo 2: Participants at the research presentation meeting

4. Other・Event Information

□ Information on Japanese Researchers (PI List)

In recent years, the importance of science and technology has continued to grow, serving not only as a driver of economic growth but also as an essential foundation supporting all aspects of society, including national security. The Government of Japan is strategically advancing science and technology diplomacy and regards Japanese researchers active overseas as an invaluable asset. In this context, efforts are being made to strengthen collaboration with researcher communities and to build professional networks.

The New England region, including Boston, is home to many of the world's leading research institutions in fields such as life sciences, biotechnology, AI, quantum technology, and energy, where many Japanese researchers are actively contributing at the forefront of their respective disciplines.

The Consulate-General of Japan in Boston believes that strengthening connections among researchers, as well as between researchers and institutions in Japan, will contribute to the deepening of Japan-U.S. cooperation and, ultimately, to strengthening Japan's national capabilities. With this in mind, the Consulate compiled and published, in February 2026, a directory of Japanese Principal Investigators (PIs)—research leaders and supervisors at universities and research institutions—active in the New England region. The New England Japanese PI List is available on the website of the Consulate-General of Japan in Boston.

This list is intended to be shared with relevant Japanese government ministries, universities, and other institutions, and to contribute to strengthening the foundation of Japan's scientific and technological capabilities by supporting young people interested in pursuing opportunities abroad, as well as Japanese universities seeking international collaborative research opportunities.

In addition, for registered PIs, strengthening connections with Japan is expected to enhance opportunities for attracting talented individuals and, in turn, increase the presence of Japanese researchers within their affiliated institutions. The Consulate also hopes to support these efforts by providing opportunities for Japan-related exchange events and networking.

●Contacting Researchers (PIs) Listed in the Directory

Please refer to the URL listed in the right-hand column of the PI List for contact information for each researcher. When contacting a PI through this directory, please include "[PI List]" in the subject line of your email.

In addition, if this list leads to opportunities such as hosting study-abroad students or international collaborative research projects, we would greatly appreciate hearing from you. Continued support for and expansion of this initiative depends on both the support of the community and the accumulation of concrete examples demonstrating how the list has been utilized. Your support is greatly appreciated.

● For PIs in New England Interested in Being Added to the Directory

Japanese researchers residing in the New England region who are active as Principal Investigators (PIs) at universities or research institutions and who wish to be included in this directory are encouraged to contact us at the address below.

Economic and Scientific Affairs Section, Consulate-General of Japan in Boston business@bz.mofa.go.jp

☐Upcoming Events

■September 10 (Thu)
University of Tsukuba Night
Organized by: University of Tsukuba
Venue: CIC Cambridge

■September 15 (Tue) – September 17 (Thu)
NINEJP Japan Innovation Hub 2026 in Boston (Cambridge)
Organized by: NINEJP
Venue: CIC Cambridge

■September 22 (Tue) – September 23 (Wed)
MIT Energy Research Conference
Organized by: MIT Energy Initiative
https://energy.mit.edu/

■September 22 (Tue) – September 23 (Wed)
World Medical Innovation Forum (WMIF)
Organized by: Mass General Brigham
Venue: Westin Boston Seaport District
https://worldmedicalinnovation.org/

■September 22 (Tue) – September 25 (Fri)
Biotech Week Boston
Venue: Hynes Convention Center

■September 24 (Thu) – September 25 (Fri)
Boston Human Spaceflight Symposium
Organized by: MGB SPEAR MED
Venue: MGH and MIT
https://bostonspaceflight.org/

■October 18 (Sun) – October 21 (Wed)
The MedTech Conference
Organized by: AdvaMed
Venue: Boston Convention and Exhibition Center
https://medtechconf.com/event/the-medtech-conference-2026/

■October 26 (Mon) – October 30 (Fri)
Tough Tech Week
Organized by: The Engine
Venue: Boston and Cambridge, MA
https://engine.xyz/toughtechweek

■October 29 (Thu) – October 30 (Fri)
The Dartmouth Conference, Revisited (Dartmouth AI@70)
Organized by: Dartmouth College
Venue: Hanover, NH
https://ai.dartmouth.edu/70th-anniversary

■November (dates TBC)
MIT Research and Development Conference
Organized by: MIT Industrial Liaison Program
Venue: Boston Marriott Cambridge