

The Future of Business in Pittsburgh

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Carnegie Mellon and Keio Showcase \$110M AI Initiative at Davos Summit

Carnegie Mellon University (CMU) President Farnam Jahanian and Keio University President Kohei Itoh spoke at the recent World Economic Forum Annual Meeting in Davos, highlighting their ambitious AI partnership and underscoring Pittsburgh's global leadership in artificial intelligence and robotics.



Farnam Jahanian, President of Carnegie Mellon University, spoke at Davos alongside Kohei Itoh, President of Keio University.
(Photo courtesy Carnegie Mellon University)

The panel, built around the theme of "Collaboration for the Intelligent Age," reinforced the strategic partnership between CMU and Keio University that was [initially announced in April 2024](#). Supported by major corporations including SoftBank, Microsoft, and Arm, the collaboration has secured \$110 million to advance cutting-edge AI research.

Speaking at Davos, CMU President Farnam Jahanian emphasized AI's transformative potential in finance, healthcare, manufacturing, and education. Kohei Itoh, President of Keio University, noted the deep ties between the institutions, highlighting Keio's strong connection to Pittsburgh: "Our previous chancellor was teaching at Carnegie Mellon. Two of the professors emeritus at Keio were also teaching at Carnegie Mellon," making the partnership a "natural choice."

The alliance illustrates Pittsburgh's continued global leadership in AI and robotics, fostering opportunities for Japanese universities, businesses and investors interested in entering one of America's premier innovation ecosystems. As AI matures and becomes central to economic growth and scientific breakthroughs worldwide, this partnership positions Pittsburgh as a leading hub for Japanese companies aiming to expand their technological footprint in the U.S.

Yaskawa Collaboration with Carnegie Mellon Launches New Robotics Company



A Yaskawa robot at the ARM Institute. (Photo by Ryan O'Shea)

A US-based subsidiary of Japanese robotics leader Yaskawa [has partnered with Carnegie Mellon University \(CMU\) and Pittsburgh's Advanced Robotics for Manufacturing \(ARM\) Institute](#) on a groundbreaking robotics initiative designed to automate challenging industrial tasks. This collaboration targeted the automation of complex grinding and polishing processes traditionally performed manually, reducing safety risks and enhancing precision.

The project specifically addressed the automation of internal polishing on turbine components for Siemens Energy. Traditionally, manual polishing is time-consuming and uncomfortable for human operators, with skilled labor often required to navigate complex shapes and confined spaces. Yaskawa's robotic technology, combined with CMU's expertise, successfully resulted in an automated system featuring laser calibration, real-time path generation, and compliance control strategies, allowing robots to perform precise internal polishing tasks previously handled manually.

Demonstrating accuracy within sub-millimeter tolerances, the technology has shown significant efficiency improvements over traditional methods. The project's success inspired CMU researchers to form a new robotics company called Instinct Robotics, which will leverage Yaskawa robotics for further commercial applications.

With Pittsburgh's global reputation as a center for robotics and AI continuing to grow, this initiative highlights the region's potential as a prime location for Japanese companies to invest and innovate. Yaskawa's involvement underscores the growing relationship between Japan and Pittsburgh, leveraging local research excellence and industrial experience to enhance manufacturing productivity.

Pittsburgh Business News and Updates

- Japanese Exchange Students to Attend Pittsburgh High School
(<https://community.triblive.com/news/3744611>)
- Clark Chilson: Teaching Zen
(<https://pittnews.com/article/188026/news/clark-chilson-teaching-zen/>)
- Abridge Announces \$250M Series D Investment
(<https://www.abridge.com/press-release/series-d>)
- Duo the owl mascot revived. Duolingo declares, "legends never die."
(<https://www.cbsnews.com/pittsburgh/news/duo-the-owl-mascot-revived-not-dead-alive-duolingo/>)
- Japanese Restaurant Chain Expanding Pittsburgh Presence
(<https://patch.com/pennsylvania/pittsburgh/japanese-restaurant-chain-expanding-pittsburgh-presence>)



About Ryan

Ryan O'Shea is a JETRO Investment Advisor focused on connecting Japanese companies to opportunities in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. He is the host of Future Grind, a podcast that explores the ethics and impact of emerging science and technology, and also works with the Pittsburgh Robotics Network. In 2017, Ryan co-founded an artificial intelligence startup that was named a Top 10 team in the IBM Watson AI XPRIZE. Ryan has represented NASA and CalTech's Jet Propulsion Laboratory as a Solar System Ambassador and serves both as a World Economic Forum Global Shaper and an ambassador for Pittsburgh AI. He is a graduate of the University of Pittsburgh & serves on the boards of multiple non-profit organizations.