

JSPS Pan Nordic Alumni Club Chair Meeting Minutes

Date:

June 22, 15:00-17:00. Online meeting via Skype

Participants:

Dr. Göran Thor, Chair of Alumni Club in Sweden (SAC)

Dr. Kristiina Jokinen, Chair of Alumni Club in Finland (ACF)

Dr. Tadaharu Tsumoto, Director of JSPS Stockholm Office

Yuriko Kawakubo, Deputy Director of JSPS Stockholm Office

Oskar Nielsen, Office Assistant of JSPS Stockholm Office

*Dr. Sam Kondo Steffensen, Chair of Alumni Club in Denmark (ACD) was expected to be present, however, unfortunately he could not participate in it.

(i) Opening remarks

Dr. Tadaharu Tsumoto opened the meeting by welcoming the participants and introducing himself since he is new to the post as the Director of the JSPS Stockholm Office.

(ii) Brief introductions of the participants

Participants introduced themselves and greeted each other.

Introductions of the Alumni Clubs

1) Activities of the Clubs

Göran Thor explained that the SAC 10-Year Anniversary Symposium was a success. Since it opened call for speakers in various fields, many SAC members could have an opportunity to deliver lectures. . Both Göran Thor and Yuriko Kawakubo agreed that this kind of activity was a great opportunity for helping the alumni club staying active. Kristiina Jokinen thought this sounded like a good idea to bear in mind when planning upcoming events for the ACF.

1a) Review of current activity plan of each Alumni Club.

The participants explained the activity plans of FY2016, Documents 2-3 ("SAC/ACF Activity Plan FY2016"). Kristiina Jokinen informed that the planned ACF Board Meeting, General Assembly and All Alumni Meeting are likely to be held on October 27.

Activity Seminar FY2016

2) Call for Activity Seminars

In Sweden the Activity Seminars will be held at KTH, Stockholm on October 11-12 and at the University of Borås on October 20. In Finland the Activity Seminar will be held in Inari on August 7-10.

Yuriko Kawakubo asked Göran Thor to discuss the upcoming seminar at KTH with the board members. The form of the event needs to be discussed, whether they would like to hold it like the SAC 10-Year Anniversary Symposium, or not, and Kjetil Falkenberg Hansen, who is arranging this activity seminar, needs to be contacted again. Göran Thor told that he will discuss this case with the SAC board and then contact JSPS Stockholm Office with the results of their discussions.

Yuriko Kawakubo informed that neither the dates nor the speakers for the Sweden-Japan Academic Network at KVA have been decided, but KVA said that January or February would be convenient for that.

As soon as KVA answer their convenient date of those months, Yuriko Kawakubo will tell that information to the alumni club boards.

The theme for the planned ACF All Alumni Meeting in October has not been decided yet, but Kristiina Jokinen explained that the ACF board will have an e-mail meeting in August and that the theme will be decided by then. However, since Yuriko Kawakubo explained that not only speakers living in Finland can be invited – but also Japanese speakers, according to the budget – Kristiina Jokinen reconsidered her plans. Because of the Japanese speakers' busy schedules Yuriko Kawakubo suggested that the arrangements should commence immediately.

Kristiina Jokinen came up with a very good point that will be considered in the future. She asked if it would be possible to hold an event in Finland at the same time, or close to the Activity Seminar at KTH in Sweden, since it might be a good and interesting idea to share speakers between the countries and alumni clubs. If we would arrange like that, the same Japanese speaker could go to both Sweden and Finland. All meeting participants thought that it might be a good (both economically and administratively) way to plan seminars and speakers in the future.

How the Clubs Activate

3) Information from JSPS Headquarter Office in Tokyo

Yuriko Kawakubo shared the same information as she presented at the SAC board meeting in March, which is found in Document 7, "Information from JSPS Headquarter Office". The information comes from the JSPS Headquarter Office in Tokyo and explains how to activate the alumni clubs. The Alumni Clubs' main purpose is networking, which can be done through the clubs' independent activities. However, these independent activities can get support, not only from JSPS, but also from local communities, funding agencies and universities. The information material also gave proposals to fix some common problems in the alumni clubs, such as how to make the symposia attractive for wider audiences, how to manage lack of financial resources and how to allure the younger generations of researchers.

Kristiina Jokinen asked Yuriko Kawakubo about students becoming members. Yuriko Kawakubo answered that Finnish students who are planning to obtain their PhD within 2 years can apply for the short-term fellowship programs that are open for all. Kristiina Jokinen asked if JSPS or the Academy of Finland will administrate these applications, and Yuriko Kawakubo answered that the Academy of Finland is in charge of the standard programs, but short-term programs should be applied directly to the JSPS Headquarter Office in Tokyo. Kristiina Jokinen informed that she has asked the Academy of Finland to promote JSPS' programs, and that some new members have been added as a result of this.

Tadaharu Tsumoto explained that some of the information in the material from the JSPS Headquarter Office in Tokyo may not be relevant for the Nordic Alumni Clubs, since it is aimed for alumni clubs all around the world. Tadaharu Tsumoto asked Göran Thor and Kristiina Jokinen to explain or suggest what their respective clubs are doing in order to activate their members. Kristiina Jokinen brought up the topic of membership fees, as in reply to how to manage the lack of financial resources. She stressed that if the alumni clubs are going to start using membership fees, the entire process must be official, completely legally conducted and registered.

3a) Administrative roles of the Board/JSPS Stockholm Office

Göran Thor explained the administrative roles of the SAC board members. He informed that everyone helps one another and that no one has a fixed position in the board. Göran Thor asked the JSPS Stockholm Office if they want to receive the SAC board's meeting minutes, and Yuriko Kawakubo

answered affirmatively. Yuriko Kawakubo explained the attached document 8, “SAC Administrative Roles of the Board”, and Göran Thor approved the explanation.

Kristiina Jokinen explained that the ACF board currently has 7 members. The ACF board will, like the SAC board, share its meeting minutes with JSPS Stockholm Office. During the board meetings the role of each board members will change accordingly to attendance and availability, but one board member is continuously responsible for handling membership information. The BRIDGE committee consists of the Chair of the board and two voluntary board members.

3b) How do the Clubs activate the partners more and how do they deal with members living in other cities than the capital areas?

All participants agreed that contact is important in order to attract many people to seminars, meetings, symposia etc. However, contact, face-to-face, is a problem, especially in Finland according to Kristiina Jokinen, since the alumni club members are scattered throughout the country. The easiest way to hold seminars is to do it in Helsinki, but Kristiina Jokinen’s main idea is to activate people in distant areas as well and several seminars have been held in other cities and regions (for example, the upcoming Activity Seminar in Inari). Since there are a lot of contacts and research correlations between Japan and Finland, she wants to try to encourage as many as possible to join the different alumni club activities.

Göran Thor pointed out that it is important to engage the researchers who have just been in Japan through a JSPS Fellowship Program, preferably within a year after their return from Japan to their home country. It is necessary for these people to network and keep in touch with others who have been through the same experiences as themselves.

Kristiina Jokinen claimed that the most important thing right now is to reach young people and researchers about the upcoming events. She requested a list of the previous Fellowship participants so that the board can send information and invitations to seminars and other related events. Göran Thor also wants to know who have recently been on Fellowship programs. Yuriko Kawakubo informed that JSPS Stockholm Office has been sending invitations to the Alumni Club to every Fellowship participant. Regarding the list of SAC members, JSPS Stockholm Office has asked them to move the information and responsibility to SAC and some members accepted it. SPS Stockholm Office will send the current information to Göran Thor.

Both Göran Thor and Kristiina Jokinen emphasized the importance of research collaboration between the Nordic countries and want to encourage more contact between the Nordic Alumni Club Boards.

Finally, Yuriko Kawakubo said that a lot of good ideas were suggested during the meeting, for example sharing Japanese speakers between the clubs. Then, she suggested to share its minutes to the Alumni Club in Denmark and it was approved by all participants.

Tadaharu Tsumoto closed the meeting with a wish for further fruitful discussions and meetings through Skype.

The meeting ended at 17:00.