

# Minutes – JSPS Pan Nordic Alumni Club Chair Meeting

## 1. Date, time and venue:

August 25, 2017, 14:00-15:30, at JSPS Stockholm Office

## 2. Participants:

(From Alumni Clubs)

Prof. Göran Thor, Chair of JSPS Alumni Club in Sweden (SAC), through Skype

Adjunct Prof. Kristiina Jokinen, Chair of JSPS Alumni Club in Finland (ACF)

Prof. Carl Winsløw, Chair of JSPS alumni Club in Denmark (ACD), through Skype

(From JSPS Stockholm Office)

Director Tadaharu Tsumoto

Deputy Director Takao Yoshihara

Office Assistant Oskar Nielsen

## 3. Summary:

The JSPS Pan Nordic Alumni Club Chair Meeting was initiated in FY2016. It is planned to be held annually in order to create a platform for the chairs of the Nordic Alumni Clubs to meet and exchange information. Through this meeting, possibilities to hold joint efforts among the three countries open up, while making the most of the respective club's activities. It also opens up for collaboration. During this year's meeting, the focus was how to enhance the clubs' activities in the future.

## 4. Minutes:

### **1. (1) Opening remarks**

Director Tsumoto opened the meeting.

### **1. (2) Explanation of the agenda**

Deputy Director Yoshihara, the chair of the meeting, explained the agenda.

### **2. (1) Reports from the Alumni Club Chairs on the Alumni Clubs' activities**

The club chairs presented their respective clubs' activities based on their yearly activity plans.

For reference: Document 1.

Prof. Thor (SAC) informed of this fiscal year's two Activity Seminars, one of which was organized at Linköping University on August 23-24. Prof. Thor explained that the SAC Activity Seminars have been organized with a wide range of subjects within many different fields.

Adjunct Prof. Jokinen (ACF) informed that ACF usually organizes one Activity Seminar in the spring and one All Alumni Meeting in the autumn, however, this year, no matter how many reminders and extensions of the deadline, there was no applications. Therefore, the ACF board plans to arrange a bigger event for the All Alumni Meeting with connections to Finland's 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of independence this year.

Prof. Winsløw (ACD) informed that since ACD is a new club and the first planned seminar was cancelled, the first Activity Seminar will be held in November this year. The Japan Alumni and Researcher Assembly (JARA) has successfully been arranged twice.

## **2. (2) Sharing information about the progress of the establishment of a JSPS Alumni Club in Norway**

Deputy Director Yoshihara shared information about the current progress of the establishment of a JSPS Alumni Club in Norway. The plan is to start in FY2018 and the preparations for the formal application are ongoing.

## **3. Exchange of opinions on how to enhance the Alumni Clubs' activities in the future**

Deputy Director Yoshihara first explained reference Document 2, which is a summary of the opinions of the club chairs that was done prior to the meeting.

Based on the responses from this hearing, JSPS Stockholm Office had prepared the reference Documents 3-1 and 3-2 with suggestions on how to enhance the clubs' activities. Deputy Director presented Document 3-1, which contains examples of the activities of other countries' JSPS alumni clubs.

Then, he explained Document 3-2, which contains suggestions on possible efforts on how to enhance the Nordic Alumni Clubs' activities. After having presented these reference documents, the participants discussed their opinions. The main points of their discussion are as follows:

- The importance of making the activity seminars scientific events with high quality, rather than focusing on networking events.
- It is important to maintain the alumni club members' interest in collaboration with Japan, and to provide a forum for young researchers to discuss their research.

- Since organizing seminars is expensive, one solution could be looking for external funding bodies, such as companies who wish to contribute or organize a joint seminar. Concrete example: ACF Activity Seminar FY2015 in Turku.
- A question was raised about whether other alumni clubs are using membership fees. JSPS Stockholm Office replied that some do, for example Germany.
- Researchers from all Nordic countries could be invited when seminars are organized within their respective fields of research. Or, when it's geographically possible to attend seminars in other countries (for example, the Öresund region in southern Sweden/capital area of Denmark).
- The chairs do not believe it is hard for interested researchers to find information about JSPS events. For example, ACD promote through Universities Denmark and the university portals, and ACF use Academy of Finland. The latter also uses it to promote the ACF, which has led to an increased number of new members.
- Prof. Winsløw asked about the chairs' opinions regarding external assessment of the activity seminar applications. For example, receiving help from the other boards. This might be a way to further collaboration, and to ameliorate the scientific quality of the activity seminars. All the participants agreed that this was a good idea to take into consideration and declared their willingness to accept such requests from other boards.

#### **4. Future schedule and management of JSPS Pan Nordic Alumni Club Chair Meeting**

The participants approved the draft from JSPS Stockholm Office with some minor changes. They decided that the date shall be set at least 3 months before the meeting. It was also decided that the next meeting will be held in May or August in 2018. The next chair for this meeting will be the chair of the SAC board.

For reference: Document 4.

#### **5. Other matters**

Adjunct Prof. Jokinen informed that this was her last JSPS Pan Nordic Alumni Club Chair Meeting since she will move to Japan to conduct research there at the AI Research Center at the National Institute of Advanced Industrial Science and Technology (AIST). The other chairs and JSPS Stockholm Office thanked her for her many contributions over the years.