

Minutes – The 3rd Pan Nordic Alumni Club Chair Meeting

1. Date, time, and venue:

September 5, 2018, 17:00-18:00, Skype

2. Participants

(From Alumni Clubs)

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

Dr. Ville Syrjälä, Chair of JSPS Alumni Club in Finland (ACF)

Prof. Carl Winsløw, Chair of JSPS Alumni Club in Denmark (ACD)

(From JSPS Stockholm Office)

Director Tadaharu Tsumoto

Deputy Director Takao Yoshihara

Office Assistant Marika Tashima

3. Summary

The JSPS Pan Nordic Alumni Club Chair Meeting was initiated in FY2016. It is 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 and collaboration among the three countries open up, while making the most of the respective club's activities. This year was the third time for the meeting to be held.

4. Minutes:

1. (1) Opening remarks

Director Tsumoto opened the meeting.

(2) Explanation of the agenda

Prof. Thor, the chair of the meeting, briefly explained the agenda.

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

The club chairs presented their respective club's activities during FY2017 and FY2018 based on their annual activity plans.

For reference: Document 1.

Prof. Thor informed of the positive increase of applications to both the BRIDGE Fellowship program and Activity Seminar scheme. He also mentioned that SAC already completed the first Activity Seminar for this fiscal year, and the second seminar will be held in November.

On the contrary, Dr. Syrjälä informed that ACF has struggled with few applications to both schemes. Dr. Syrjälä also mentioned that ACF plans to have an Activity Seminar in Helsinki on October 5, and the All Alumni Meeting is planned to be held early next year.

Prof. Winsløw informed that ACD, though a rather small club, received several applications to the BRIDGE Fellowship program and one application of high quality to the Activity Seminar scheme in both FY2017 and FY2018. He also mentioned that ACD has not had new membership applications for a while and wondered how many Danish researchers are going to Japan through JSPS Fellowship programs. ACD also plans to hold the Japan Alumni and Researcher Assembly (JARA) on March 15, 2019.

Director Tsumoto encouraged that each club put more stress on the advantage of applying for the BRIDGE Fellowship program, as it is exclusive for alumni club members.

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

Deputy Director Yoshihara informed that an application for authorization of the club has been submitted to the JSPS Head Office and that a board of active members has been formed. The club currently has 48 members and though it is yet to be officially authorized, they are working on a voluntarily basis with activities planned during FY2018.

3. How to accelerate the seminars

Topics of discussion were how to increase the number of applications, how to increase the number of participants, and the way seminars are managed.

For reference: Document 2.

Prof. Thor commented that the number of applications has increased but due to a limited number of members, it might be difficult to increase the number of applications even more. Concerning the number of participants, he emphasized that this was a task to be handled by those organizing the seminars. Prof. Thor also mentioned that a topic the SAC board members have discussed before was the participation of more Japanese researchers.

In the case of Denmark, Prof. Winsløw informed that the Activity Seminars have had topics closely related to Japan which might have been a reason for the number of Japanese guests attending the seminars. ACD strives for applications of good quality rather than quantity, and mentioned that information of the Activity Seminar scheme is spread through the club's newsletter and sometimes by personal encouragement. He said that even though there might be an interest among members, the problem is to have the energy to organize a seminar, which might be a reason for few applicants.

The other chairs agreed, and Prof. Thor informed that the SAC board uses different channels to spread information to the universities in Sweden.

4. Exchange of opinions on how to enhance the Alumni Clubs' activities in the future

At the meeting last year, one topic of discussion was the possibility to organize a seminar together with another club. Prof. Thor brought up Prof. Winsløw's suggestion from the last meeting, to call upon each other when in need. Prof. Winsløw clarified that situations which would require help from other boards could be when reviewing the applications to the BRIDGE Fellowship program.

For reference: Document 3-1 and 3-2.

5. Future schedule and management of JSPS Pan Nordic Alumni Club Chair Meeting

At the meeting last year, JSPS Stockholm Office introduced a proposal on the future schedule and management of the meeting to which the chairs agreed upon. At the meeting this year, Deputy Director Yoshihara asked the chairs whether the schedule and management of the meeting were still acceptable and reminded that it would be Finland's turn next to chair the meeting. All chairs agreed to continue with the proposed schedule and management, and the Finnish chair will set a date for the meeting next year.

For reference: Document 4.

6. Other matters

JSPS Stockholm Office wondered how each club are managing the members list and whether the chairs had experienced any difficulties or troubles within their club.

Prof. Thor confirmed that the teamwork in Sweden works quite well and that the members list was handled by a designated board member.

Dr. Syrjälä mentioned that he is newly appointed chair and two new board members have also joined recently. Due to this, they have not been able to meet in person yet. At the next ACF board meeting in October, all board members are planned to be present and the task of handling the members list will be decided then. Currently, Dr. Syrjälä is managing the members list.

Prof. Winsløw informed that the current board has a good relation with most communication done through e-mail and Skype. Changes and additions in the Danish members list are usually made by the JSPS Stockholm Office.

The three chairs agreed to post the respective Activity Plans for FY2018 on the website of JSPS Stockholm Office.

The meeting was closed by Prof. Thor at 18:00.