



JSPS SAN FRANCISCO OFFICE NEWSLETTER

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DIRECTOR'S COLUMN



Recent Updates from the JSPS San Francisco Office

Yusaku Nakabeppu
Director

On April 1st, 2024, Mr. Yusuke Kumano, a researcher at the National Museum of Nature and Science, joined our center as an International Program Associate (IPA). Due to the single-member structure of the IPA team, we temporarily suspended the publication of our newsletter to avoid excessive workload. After Mr. Kumano returned to Japan at the end of March 2025, we resumed newsletter publication with the arrival of two new IPAs on April 1st, 2025: Ms. Chihiro Shiraishi from Kumamoto University and Mr. Takuro Ota from Hirosaki University.

Director Yusaku Nakabeppu sharing JSPS Projects at the Alumni Association Gathering in Argentina, November 27th /2024

In addition, MEXT advisor Mr. Yuki Shigeta returned to Japan at the end of September 2024, and his successor, Ms. Chihiro Asakura, arrived in early October. At the end of June 2025, Mr. Kazumasa Oda, an International Program Intern dispatched from High Energy Accelerator Research Organization (KEK) to SLAC National Accelerator Laboratory at Stanford University, completed his three-year term and returned to Japan. In August 2025, Deputy Director Mr. Manabu Ikeda from Tokyo University of Science will complete his two-year term and return to his original post. He will be succeeded in September by Mr. Masaki Tamada from Hitotsubashi University.

In the United States, the second Trump administration took office in January 2025. President Trump is actively pursuing his campaign promises, including the deportation of undocumented immigrants, banning DEI-related activities, cutting research funding to universities, imposing tariffs, and engaging in ceasefire negotiations between Ukraine and Russia, as well as conflict resolution talks involving Israel, Hamas, and Iran.

Since June, protests against forced searches and detentions of undocumented immigrants have spread nationwide, starting in Los Angeles. The Trump administration has mobilized the California National Guard and the Marine Corps to suppress these demonstrations. On June 14th, a military parade commemorating the 250th anniversary of the U.S. Army was held, coinciding with President Trump's 79th birthday. In response, "No Kings Day" demonstrations were held across the country.

JSPS San Francisco office is located in downtown Berkeley, about a 10-minute walk from the University of California, Berkeley. The campus and surrounding area remain calm, and our staff continue their daily routines peacefully.

Among the six missions of JSPS Overseas Offices, our office places particular emphasis on building and following up on international research networks involving local researchers, including Japanese researchers. Below are three initiatives related to this mission:

Introduction to the PI Map Project

Japan has long produced world-renowned academic researchers. As the global role of academic research, including science and technology, continues to grow, it is increasingly important to foster researchers who can thrive both domestically and internationally. Principal Investigators (PIs) serve as research leaders at universities and institutions overseas and are considered vital assets for Japan, as they can facilitate connections with the global communities through their extensive ties and international experience.

The San Francisco Bay Area is home to top-tier universities such as the University of California (UC) Berkeley, UC San Francisco, UC Davis, and Stanford University. While many Japanese researchers are believed to be active as PIs at these universities and other institutions, detailed information has been lacking. Given the large number of Japanese students and postdocs in the Bay Area, there has been a growing call for a network of Japanese PIs to facilitate contact even before students arrive. Additionally, Japanese government officials and university executives frequently visit Bay Area universities, underscoring the need for Japanese researchers familiar with local conditions.

In response, under the leadership of the Consulate-General of Japan in San Francisco, JSPS San Francisco office collaborated with the Consulate's Science and Technology Fellow and local Japanese research communities to compile a list of 34 PIs with strong ties to Japan. This list was published as the Bay Area PI Map. On February 3rd, 2025, the first opinion exchange meeting was held at the Consul General's residence, where attendees discussed how to utilize the map and offered various recommendations to the Japanese government.



The first opinion exchange meeting of Bay Area PIs on February 3rd, 2025

The Bay Area PI Map was made publicly available on the Consulate-General's website (https://www.sf.us.emb-japan.go.jp/itpr_ja/principalinvestigator.html) on May 23rd, 2025. This PI map is expected to support young Japanese individuals seeking international opportunities and universities pursuing joint research, thereby fostering excellent researchers, promoting international collaboration, and strengthening Japan's scientific, technological, and diplomatic capabilities by visualizing the presence of Japanese researchers worldwide.



Access PI Map Here

Collaborative Activities with Japanese Researchers Communities

There are more than ten Japanese researchers' communities on the West Coast of the United States that host lectures and events to support Japanese researchers and their families (<https://www.jspsusa-sf.org/community/>). JSPS San Francisco office collaborates with the United Japanese researchers Around the world (UJA), to which thirty-five Japanese researchers' communities across the United States joined, to develop various joint activities.

We host biannual Japanese Researchers Gathering to promote interdisciplinary collaboration and information sharing among young researchers. Participants include students and researchers of any nationality who are currently in or planning to travel to the Americas, affiliated with universities, research institutions, or companies, and able to communicate in Japanese. Non-researchers involved in research-related work are also welcome. Since FY2024, these meetings have been planned in cooperation with the UJA Community Liaison Committee.

The summer gathering is held online via SpatialChat and is open to participants from across the Americas and Japan. It includes JSPS project presentations, Flash Talks, poster sessions, community introductions, and an online networking reception. *The FY2025 (Summer) Japanese Researchers Gathering is scheduled for Saturday, August 23rd, 2025, from 12:15 to 16:35 (PDT), and preparations are underway.*

Annually, the winter Japanese Researchers Gathering is held in person at the David Brower Center in downtown Berkeley. It typically features keynote speeches by two invited speakers, Flash Talks, poster sessions, community introductions, and JSPS project briefings. Despite being held in Berkeley, the event attracts participants from the East Coast and regularly hosts over one hundred attendees.

The FY2023 and 2024 (Winter) Japanese Researchers Gathering were supported by the Consulate-General of Japan in San Francisco and featured keynote speeches on Japan's science and technology diplomacy by advisors to the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Japan. The FY2025 (Winter) Japanese Researchers Gathering is scheduled for the afternoon of Saturday, February 7th, 2026 (PST) at the David Brower Center. Outstanding poster presentations at both summer and winter Japanese Researchers Gatherings are recognized with poster awards based on participant votes and judge deliberations to encourage engagement.

JSPS San Francisco Office members actively participate in seminars and lectures hosted by Japanese research communities in the Bay Area and the West Coast of the United States, and the Director regularly gives talks to strengthen collaboration. In February 2024, we supported the first Japan-US Science Forum in Southern California held at University of California, Los Angeles, organized by Southern California Japanese Scholars Forum, to enhance ties with researchers in Southern California.



Flyer for 2nd UJA Global Gathering that occurred on April 25th - 26th, 2025

Additionally, JSPS co-hosted the 2nd UJA Global Gathering at Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center on April 25th – 26th, 2025. Alongside the Embassy of Japan in the United States, the Consulate-General in Detroit, JST, AMED, NEDO, and JETRO, we held briefings on research grants and fellowships for Japanese and local researchers and exchanged views on collaborative activities with Japanese researcher communities in the United States.

Following the 2nd UJA Global Gathering, monthly Japanese government-UJA meetings have been held to gather information and exchange views on the impact of the second Trump administration on higher education and science policy. JST, AMED, and JSPS collaborated to host a webinar on July 8th for Japanese residents in the United States about overseas funding opportunities.

Approach to Latin American Countries

The JSPS San Francisco Office covers not only the West Coast of North America but also Latin America. Among Latin American countries, Brazil is a particularly important partner for Japan in promoting scientific exchange. To further invigorate scientific collaboration with Brazil and the Latin American region, JSPS appointed Professor Masato Ninomiya of the University of São Paulo's Faculty of Law as the São Paulo Advisor in 2015. For nearly ten years since then, Professor Ninomiya has made significant contributions to promoting scientific exchange between Japan and Brazil, including co-hosting symposia with JSPS.

Although the COVID-19 pandemic made it difficult to hold such joint symposia in recent years, in FY2024, JSPS was able to co-host a symposium with the Heart Institute of the University of São Paulo in collaboration with Professor Ninomiya. The symposium, titled “InCor-JSPS Joint International Symposium: Regulatory Mechanisms of Sleep and Its Impairments” was held on September 17th, 2024. Dr. Masashi Yanagisawa and Dr. Shun Nakajima, leading researchers from the International Institute for Integrative Sleep Medicine (WPI-IIS) at the University of Tsukuba, one of the world's top WPI research centers in sleep science, were invited to present their latest research findings and future perspectives in the field of sleep. Nearly one hundred people attended the symposium in person, and it was also streamed online with eighty viewers.

Following the symposium, a staff seminar was held with the Respiratory Division of the Heart Institute, involving fifteen staff members who introduced their research and engaged in active academic exchange with Dr. Yanagisawa and Dr. Nakajima.



Flyer for InCor-JSPS Joint International Symposium - September 17th, 2025

Two representatives from the JSPS San Francisco Office — the Liaison Officer and I — participated in the symposium and seminar. In addition, we visited the Federal University of São Paulo (UNIFESP) and the Butantan Institute to introduce JSPS fellowship programs and international collaborative research initiatives.



In January 2024, JSPS Headquarters received a request to establish a JSPS Alumni Association in Argentina. From November 25th to 29th, I visited the National University of La Plata in Argentina and met with Ms. Graciela Humbert Lan, Director of International Affairs, and Professor Guillermo Giovambattista of the Faculty of Veterinary Sciences (a JSPS alumnus), who explained the plans for establishing the alumni association. I also participated in the alumni event. The event attracted over seventy participants from various fields and research institutions. It was expressed that the Argentine JSPS Alumni Association aims to promote science and technology in Argentina through collaborative research and workshops with Japan. I delivered congratulatory remarks at the opening of the alumni association and introduced JSPS's international programs, fostering mutual exchange through a Q&A session.

On April 17th, 2024, I gave an invited lecture titled “Biological significance of the defense mechanisms against oxidative damage in the genome – from Cancer to Alzheimer's Disease –” at the Research and Innovation Day, commemorating the 200th anniversary of the National University of Trujillo in Peru. In addition to Brazil and Argentina, we are also introducing JSPS fellowship and international exchange programs online to universities in Chile and Peru. Our office is thus actively promoting academic exchange with universities in Latin America.

RECENT ACTIVITIES

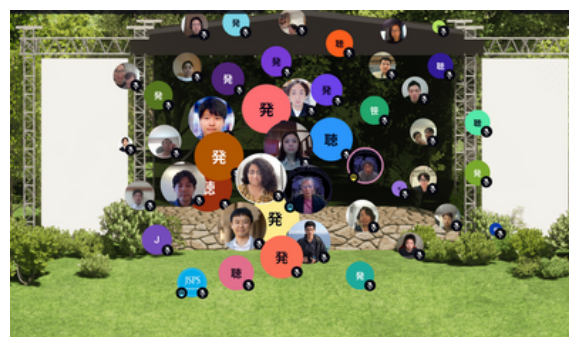
Summer 2024 Japanese Researchers Gathering

2024年度（夏）日本人研究者交流会（Online）

August 24th, 2024

The JSPS San Francisco Office hosted the Summer 2024 Japanese Researchers Gathering (organized by the JSPS SFO with the cooperation of United Japanese researchers Around the world) on August 24th, 2024.

The purpose of this meeting is to promote cross-disciplinary exchanges among Japanese researchers working in the Americas and to enhance their research activities through the exchange of information. This year's event was held on SpatialChat, an online group chat tool that enables more realistic communication, and was attended by eighty participants, including researchers working as PIs in the U.S., visiting researchers, university faculty, post-doctoral fellows, graduate students, university students, and corporate researchers.



Participants of the Summer 2024 Japanese Researchers Gathering on SpatialChat

After opening remarks and an explanation of JSPS's projects, a poster session including flash talks was held. Thirty-three people made poster presentations in a variety of research fields and actively exchanged opinions with the audience. After the presentations, the participants voted and awarded prizes to the eight presenters who gave the most outstanding presentations. Japanese communities were also introduced, and a representative from each community explained the activities of the communities active in various regions of the Americas.

See pg. 34 for
more info!

The FY2025 (Summer) Japanese Researchers Gathering is will be held on Saturday, August 23rd, 2025, from 12:15 to 16:35 (PDT)

Finally, a reception was held in four rooms divided by theme. The themes of each room were "Entrepreneurship-Related," "Career Development," "Obtaining Grants and International Collaboration," and "Others," where participants could talk about any topic they wanted; there was a lot of networking and exchanging of ideas among participants in each room. Although this year's event held many firsts, such as conducting this exchange on SpatialChat and awarding prizes for outstanding poster presentations, thanks to everyone's cooperation, this event was a great success.

Workshop for Japanese University Administrative Staff in the U.S. 2024

November 14-15th, 2024

On Thursday, November 14th, a total of twelve participants, including university staff currently in the U.S. for training and other purposes, took part in the workshop. Mr. Koichiro Aoshima (Assistant Director, International Student Services & Outreach, Office of International Programs, San Francisco State University) and Ms. Chikako Walker (Acting Director of International Education, San Mateo County Community College District) were invited to talk about their experiences in the U.S. and their work environment.



Participants of the Japanese University Administrative Staff Workshop, holding up their dreams for their stay



Participants of the Japanese University Administrative Staff Workshop on UC Berkeley campus

Mr. Aoshima spoke extensively about his background, his experiences in the U.S., and the work environment in the U.S. Participants then shared what they had noticed after coming to the U.S., the differences in working styles between Japan and the U.S., difficulties, worries, etc. They expressed their determination for the second half of the training program and how they would like to make use of their experiences here for their work after returning home.

The following day, five University of California, Berkeley (UCB) staff members, including Mr. Christopher Reed (Global Engagement Coordinator, Global Engagement Office, UCB), a former staff member of our office, joined to speak as a panel discussion on the nature of their work at UCB. Mr. Reed then led the group on a tour of the University of California, Berkeley campus, followed by a visit to the C. V. Starr East Asian Library in the afternoon.

The workshop was a success, with active interaction among the lecturers, participants, and our office staff throughout the two days. JSPS SFO plans to continue to hold the workshop for university staff in the U.S. annually.

Winter 2024 Japanese Researchers Gathering

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2024年度（冬）日本人研究者交流会

February 1st, 2025

The JSPS San Francisco Office hosted the annual Winter Japanese Researchers Exchange Meeting on February 1st, 2025. The purpose of this meeting is to promote interdisciplinary exchanges among Japanese researchers active in the U.S. and to enhance their research activities through the exchange of information and deepening friendship. Approximately 102 people attended the meeting, including researchers who are active as PIs in the U.S., visiting researchers, university faculty and staff, post-doctoral researchers, university students, and corporate researchers.

After opening remarks and an introduction of JSPS programs, flash talks and poster sessions were held by participants. The program was a meaningful event that expanded exchanges among researchers in different fields. After the poster session, three Japanese research communities in the Bay Area were introduced.



Participants of the Winter 2024 Japanese Researchers Exchange Meeting in the David Brower Center



During the Poster Session

The keynote speaker was Motoko Kotani, Deputy Chief Advisor to the Minister of Foreign Affairs for Science and Technology, who spoke on "Japan's Science and Technology Policy and Diplomacy and Toward the Development of an International Research Environment." She explained Japan's science and technology policy, science and technology diplomacy, and the current status and challenges of the international brain circulation, etc. During the Q&A session, participants exchanged opinions on the future of science and technology in Japan.

Professor Keisuke Goda (Department of Chemistry, Graduate School of Science, the University of Tokyo) gave a lecture titled "My career that spans academia and industry in Japan, the U.S., and China," in which he discussed his career and research with participants in a Q&A session. Participants enjoyed the lectures and commented that it was very interesting to learn about the differences in the research environment between Japan, the U.S., and China, and how Dr. Goda's laboratory is run.

Finally, a panel discussion was held with the two speakers as panelists. Participants commented that it was good to hear open opinions from different perspectives. A reception was held after the meeting, where researchers exchanged opinions and networked with each other. Thanks to the support of many people, an amazing experience was shared with the participants, and we look forward to our next gathering.



Professor Keisuke Goda, Director Nakabeppu, and Deputy Chief Advisor Motoko Kotani hosting a panel discussion

The FY2025 (Winter) Japanese Researchers Gathering is scheduled for the afternoon of Saturday, February 7th, 2026 (PST) at the David Brower Center.

In 2024, JSPS SFO was fortunate to be in contact with many universities in South America, in line with the desire to disseminate JSPS international exchange programs to the broader global South. Director Nakabeppu was invited to speak at the 200th Anniversary of National University of Trujillo, Peru, in April, and he shared his career's research along with information about JSPS and its programs. JSPS is fortunate to have many international alumni who have been willing to share their experiences at sessions discussing the JSPS fellowships. In early June 2024, the office had a small online information session with the University of the Pacific of Peru in conjunction with their Center of China and Asia Pacific Studies. Later, in July, JSPS information was shared with attendees at an online session coordinated by the National University of San Marcos, in Peru. Finally, before leaving for the symposium in São Paulo, a gathering was held online with the Universidad de Los Andes, in Chile. More than before, many scholars in South America are learning about JSPS.



4/17/2024

Research and Innovation Conference in Biological Sciences on celebrating the Bicentennial of the National University of Trujillo – Peru: Lecture by Director Nakabeppu (ONLINE)



6/6/2024

The Universidad del Pacífico, Peru - Information Session (ONLINE)



7/17/2024

National University of San Marcos, Peru - Information Session (ONLINE)



9/12/2024

Universidad de los Andes, Chile - Information Session (ONLINE)



9/15/2024

Universidade Federal de São Paulo [UNIFESP] - Information Session in São Paulo, Brazil



9/17/2024



InCor-JSPS Joint International Symposium in
São Paulo, Brazil



Butantan Institute - Joint Information Session in
São Paulo, Brazil

9/18/2024



11/27/2024

Universidad Nacional de La Plata, [UNLP] -
Alumni Association Gathering in Argentina

University of California, San Diego, Kyoto University, Keihanshin Startup Academia Coalition Symposium October 15th - 17th, 2024

JSPS SFO sponsored a joint research symposium of University of California, San Diego (UCSD), Kyoto University, and the Keihanshin Startup Academia Coalition (KSAC), and participated in the symposium for the purpose of explaining JSPS's programs to the symposium participants. The symposium intended to identify areas for joint research efforts with UCSD, Kyoto University, KSAC, and other industrial partners to create solutions to the growing challenges of energy supply and use in society, and to explore opportunities for implementing technology into society. SFO sponsored the symposium and provided a three-day presentation of projects, researcher support, and networking to relevant stakeholders.



Panel Discussion during the UC San Diego, Kyoto University, and KSAC Joint Symposium

Liaison Officer Hughes gave presentations on JSPS programs. After the trip, UCSD staff informed us that two groups, Associate Professor Jun Hirotani of Kyoto University and Professor Bandaru of UCSD, and Associate Professor Yoshihiko Usui of Kyoto University and Professor Cortes of UCSD, had agreed to collaborate in the future.

The 1st Japan-US Science Forum in Southern California - Frontiers in Science: Innovations in AI and Data Science February 22nd, 2025

JSPS San Francisco Office, alongside the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA) Terasaki Center for Japanese Studies, supported the 1st annual Japan-US Science Forum in Southern California: "Frontiers in Science: Innovation in AI and Data Science," as presented by the Southern California Japanese Scholar Forum (SCJSF) and the Nichibei Doctors Club (NDC). Associate Professor Akinari Kitago of the School of Dentistry, University of California, Los Angeles, consulted with JSPS SFO regarding the organization of this Forum. After an opening address by Director Nakabeppu, Liaison Officer Abigail Hughes explained the fellowship program for foreign researchers to about fifty participants, and then Deputy Director Ikeda explained the Accelerated International Research Collaboration Fund (Return Home Development Research). Associate Professor Jonathan Kao, Professor Graciela Gonzalez Hernandez, MS PhD, and Professor Katsushi Arisaka introduced us to their innovative research, leading the audience in an engrossing panel discussion, and the participants showed off their knowledge in a wonderful poster session. The first annual session was a great success and JSPS SFO looks forward to next year.



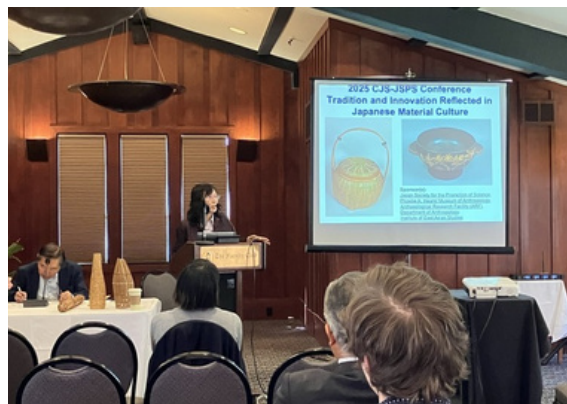
*Panel of the 1st annual Japan-US Science Forum in Southern California:
"Frontiers in Science: Innovation in AI and Data Science"*

University of California, Berkeley, Center for Japanese Studies symposium - “Tradition and Innovation Reflected in Japanese Material Culture” February 28th, 2025

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JSPS San Francisco Office co-hosted with the Center for Japanese Studies at the University of California, Berkeley, an international symposium entitled “Tradition and Innovation Reflected in Japanese Material Culture.” The symposium was held at Seaborg Room in the Faculty Club of UC Berkeley.

The symposium invited scholars involved in the study of Japanese material culture from Japan and the U.S. to discuss the traditions and innovations of Japanese material culture, with a focus on *mingu* (traditional everyday tools), porcelain, and lacquerware from a variety of perspectives. Five lectures and plenary discussions were held, with the aim of deepening discussions from various perspectives on tradition and innovation in material culture. The discussions among the speakers continued even after the end of the day's schedule, and the participants commented that they enjoyed the interesting content. The objective of promoting academic exchange between Japan and the U.S. by providing researchers with an opportunity to present and discuss their latest research results was achieved. The event was a success, with lively exchanges among the speakers and participants.



UCB CJS symposium “Tradition and Innovation Reflected in Japanese Material Culture”

University of California, Santa Barbara - International Conference “The Makers of Buddhism” March 3rd - 5th, 2025

Professor Fabio Rambelli, Distinguished Professor (Religious Studies & East Asian Cultures), International Shinto Foundation Chair in Shinto Studies, Chair of Religious Studies, at the University of California, Santa Barbara established this symposium in conjunction with JSPS. The symposium also included presenters from Mongolia and France, as well as the US. Director Nakabeppu gave the opening greeting for the symposium gathering. As one of the presenters was online, and to provide a record of the meeting, the symposium was held in a hybrid format. There were three keynote lectures and fifteen presentations over the course of three days.



UCSB International Conference “The Makers of Buddhism”

Graduate students, professors, and undergraduate students were in attendance periodically. The lectures were often followed with questions and answers, and lively discussions on Buddhism at various levels were had daily at pre-appointed times. One of the most widely discussed topics was the Shitennoji Temple and the Kongo Gumi, as representatives were in attendance. Many people were interested in how the temple was created and the story of Prince Shotoku. JSPS fellowship information pamphlets were laid out, and a JSPS information session was held by Liaison Officer Hughes on the second day.

People began discussing further collaborations specifically between France and Japan. Distinguished professors were unaware of JSPS invitational fellowships and were happy to consider the chance to conduct their research in Japan. Director Nakabeppu gave a greeting speech at the conclusion of the symposium at the JSPS sponsored dinner, as requested by Professor Rambelli. All the attendees expressed enjoyment and were thinking of how to proceed to the next collaboration.

2nd United Japanese researchers Around the world (UJA) Global Gathering

April 25th-26th, 2025

Director Yusaku Nakabeppu, International Program Associate Chihiro Shiraishi, and International Program Associate Takuro Ota participated in the 2nd United Japanese researchers Around the world Global Gathering held on Friday, April 25th and Saturday, April 26th, at the Cincinnati Children's Hospital. The first day of the conference was dedicated to the “UJA Global Gathering” held at Cincinnati Children's Hospital, with a hybrid program of face-to-face and online sessions, with keynote speeches, Research Award presentations, and panel discussions held in English on each theme.

Director Nakabeppu gave an explanation of JSPS programs under the title of “Introduction to JSPS programs for Fostering Next Generation of Japanese Researchers Worldwide.” The panel discussion that followed was titled “JSPS Programs for Fostering Next Generation of Japanese Researchers.” He also participated as a panelist in the panel discussion “Ways to Increase Research and Training Collaboration Between Cincinnati and Japan” that followed.



2nd UJA Global Gathering - JSPS booth with JSPS SFO and JSPS WAS members



2nd UJA Global Gathering - Presenters

On the second day, symposiums and panel discussions were held in a hybrid face-to-face and online format, with each theme presented in Japanese, and Director Nakabeppu gave a lecture on “Collaborative Activities between the JSPS Overseas Offices and the Japanese Researcher Communities.” In addition, a panel discussion was held on “Establishing Researcher Communities Abroad: An Initiative to Develop a Practical Manual,” in which he participated as a panelist.

More than two hundred people participated in the two-day event, and many lively Q&A sessions were held after the lectures and during the panel discussion. The JSPS booth also exhibited during the two-day event, and was managed in cooperation with the JSPS Washington Office. Participants visited the booth on both days and asked many questions about overseas special researchers, foreign special researchers, returnee development research, and other topics.



2nd UJA Global Gathering - JSPS booth with JSPS SFO and JSPS WAS members and interested attendees



For more information about UJA (United Japanese researchers Around the world), please check their [website](#)!



University of California, Los Angeles - Kyoto University - Academia Sinica Pan Pacific Meeting May 14th-16th, 2025

JSPS SFO members, Director Nakabeppu, Liaison Officer Abigail Hughes, and International Program Associate Chihiro Shiraishi, gave a presentation on JSPS and exchanged opinions at the UCLA Terasaki Center on Tuesday, May 13th, and attended the UCLA-Kyoto University-Academia Sinica Pan Pacific Meeting at UCLA from Wednesday, May 14th to Friday, May 16th.

On May 13th, at the UCLA Terasaki Center, Professor Hitoshi Abe, Director of the UCLA Terasaki Center for Japanese Studies and Associate Professor Yusuke Tsugawa of the UCLA School of Medicine and Public Health (and Director of the UCLA Internal Medicine Data Core) presented an overview of the JSPS, fellowship programs, and bilateral exchanges were explained, and a discussion furthering the collaboration between the two groups was held.



UCLA-Terasaki Center for Japanese Studies - Professor Hitoshi Abe and Associate Professor Yusuke Tsugawa with JSPS SFO members



UCLA-Kyoto University-Academia Sinica Pan Pacific Meeting, Tour of UCLA Campus

May 14th, Day 1 of the Pan Pacific Meeting, began with opening remarks, followed by a keynote lecture (video) by Dr. Tasuku Honjo, Director of the Cancer Center for Immunotherapy and Immunobiology (CCII), Kyoto University Graduate School of Medicine, and a keynote lecture by Dr. Owen Witte, UCLA President's Chair in Developmental Immunology and Professor, UCLA School of Medicine's Chair/Professor of Developmental Immunology at UCLA and three thematic sessions were held in English.

The second day of the Pan Pacific Meeting was also face-to-face, with four thematic sessions and a keynote lecture by Professor

Emeritus Shinya Yamanaka of the Kyoto University iPS Cell Research Institute. After the lectures, the participants also took a tour of the UCLA campus. Finally, a reception was held at the Luskin Conference Center on the UCLA campus, which Director Nakabeppu attended and gave a speech.

On the final day, Director Nakabeppu gave an explanation of JSPS programs in a presentation titled "Introduction to JSPS programs for promoting international academic collaboration." Throughout the three days of the meeting, JSPS fellowship program pamphlets were distributed to interested attendees during coffee breaks. Foreign students from UCLA who are interested in Japan asked about the JSPS fellowship program, and Japanese researchers asked about JSPS projects.



UCLA-Kyoto University-Academia Sinica Pan Pacific Meeting, Picture of Participants in front of the California Nanosystems Institute Building

The Pan Pacific Meeting was a great success, with more than three hundred participants over the three days, and active Q&A sessions were held after each keynote speech and session.

RECENT INFORMATION SESSIONS & BOOTHS



Oregon State University, Oregon Health and Science University, Portland State University, University of Oregon, University of Washington (ONLINE) 4/19/2024

Stanford University, Asia Pacific Research Center (APARC) 4/29/2024

University of California, Santa Cruz 5/14/2024

Non-Federal Sources Funding Opportunities Fair [Torrey Pines Training Consortium Funding Fest] 6/11/2024 (ONLINE)

University of Texas at Dallas, Rice University, Southern Methodist University 7/2/2024 (ONLINE)

University of California, Berkeley, BAKAI Symposium 9/26/2024

University of Hawaii at Manoa 10/29/2024 (ONLINE)

University of California, Davis 11/18/2024 (ONLINE)

Booth at Fall 2024 AGU Meeting, Exhibit Hall, Washington Convention Center, Washington, D.C. 12/10-13/2024

University of Washington 1/16/2025

Stanford University, Asia Pacific Research Center (APARC) 4/30/2025

University of California, Irvine 5/8/2025 (ONLINE)

Non-Federal Sources Funding Opportunities Fair [Torrey Pines Training Consortium Funding Fest] 6/3/2025 (ONLINE)



OFFICE MEMBERS' GREETINGS

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Yuki Shigeta

MEXT Advisor

October 2023 - September 2024

It has been about a year since I returned to Japan after completing my one-year assignment at the JSPS San Francisco Office. At the beginning of my term, I expressed my desire to visit as many universities as possible and to support Japanese universities and researchers through my work.

I am grateful to have had many opportunities to engage with researchers and institutions across North America, gaining firsthand insight into international academic exchange.

During my time in San Francisco, I was continuously inspired by the people I met and the vibrant research environment I encountered. These experiences offered me new perspectives and networks that continue to enrich my current work back in Japan.

Although my assignment has ended, the connections and insights I gained remain valuable. I hope to continue contributing to international collaboration by building on what I learned during my time at JSPS San Francisco.



I would like to take this opportunity to thank all those who supported and welcomed me throughout my stay.

Chihiro Asakura

MEXT Advisor

October 2024 - March 2026

Hello! My name is Chihiro Asakura. I joined the JSPS San Francisco Office as an advisor in October 2024 for an 18-month term.



I have spent more than seven years at Japan's Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT). I belonged to the Elementary and Secondary Education Bureau, working on policies related to bullying, school absenteeism, child abuse, and other issues. I also promoted EBPM (Evidence-based Policy Making), helped support the Tokyo Olympic Games, and, most recently, I served at the Japan Sports Agency, which included a visit to the Paris Paralympic Games.

I am currently a visiting scholar at the University of California, researching UC governance, IR (Institutional Research), admissions systems, and related topics. This experience is giving me valuable insights into California's higher-education landscape, and I hope to apply them to improving higher-education policy in Japan. Thanks to JSPS, I have connected with many researchers and attended events that enrich my work.

I love the Bay Area, especially its perfect weather. These days, I spend most weekends hiking and enjoying California's natural beauty, which greatly boosts my well-being. I am grateful to the JSPS team, MEXT, and everyone who supports my work and life in California. I look forward to contributing to Japanese universities and the wider academic community.

Greetings from Japan

Dear colleagues and friends,

I hope this message finds you well. I am writing to inform you that I have returned to Japan after completing my assignment at the JSPS San Francisco Office, where I had the privilege of serving from April 2024 to March 2025.

During my time in San Francisco, I had the wonderful opportunity to work closely with the Japanese researchers' exchange programs and contribute to the activities of the Association of Japanese University Staff in America. These experiences have been incredibly enriching, allowing me to facilitate meaningful connections between Japanese and American academic communities while supporting the professional development of Japanese researchers and university staff members abroad. The relationships I built and the insights I gained during my tenure at the JSPS San Francisco Office have been invaluable. I am deeply grateful for the warm welcome I received from the local academic community and for the collaborative spirit that made our various initiatives successful.

As I transition back to my role in the National Museum of Nature and Science, I carry with me not only fond memories but also a renewed commitment to fostering international academic collaboration. I look forward to applying the knowledge and experience I gained during my time in JSPS San Francisco Office to continue supporting the advancement of Japanese research on the global stage. Please feel free to reach out if you are ever in Japan or if there are opportunities for continued collaboration. I would be delighted to reciprocate the hospitality and support I received during my time in the United States. Thank you once again for making my experience in San Francisco so memorable and productive.

Best regards,

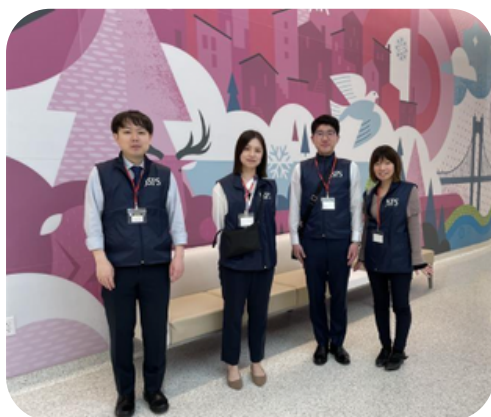
Yusuke Kumano

Yusuke Kumano
International Program Associate
April 2024 - March 2025



Chihiro Shiraishi

International Program Associate
April 2025-March 2026



Hello, I am Chihiro Shiraishi from Kumamoto University. I have joined JSPS San Francisco Office as an International Program Associate (IPA) on April 1st, 2025, and will stay for one year. Before joining this office, I was in the JSPS headquarters for one year, I was in charge of managing the A3 Foresight Program (this program supports joint research conducted by researchers of Japan, China and Korea) and the Core-to-Core Program (B. Asia-Africa Science Platforms) under a very respected and sweet supervisor.

This is my second stay in the U.S. The first time was a one-week homestay as part of the University's Global University Project supported by JSPS. It's the first time I've lived abroad for a long time, so it's a very exciting and gratifying experience. Here is a picture of me wearing our JSPS promotional merchandise when we had a booth at the 2nd UJA Global Gathering in April. The hospital has a 24-hour café and I loved it. The staff at Cincinnati Children's Hospital were very kind to us.

I have worked in administrative roles at Kumamoto University Hospital, the Faculty of Pharmaceutical Sciences, the Finance Department, the Faculty of Natural Sciences and National Institute of Technology (KOSEN), Kumamoto College. I hope to visit as many universities and university hospitals as I can.

Through my work experiences, I would like to try my best to support Japanese universities, researchers and health care providers.



Takuro Ota

International Program Associate
April 2025 - March 2026

My name is Takuro Ota. I am very excited to be here in Berkeley, California for an entire year. I am here with JSPS San Francisco office as an International Program Associate and in this role, I meet students and faculty to share information about programs to promote research collaboration between Japanese and American universities and other institutions.

For the last three months, I have had opportunities to visit Montana State University and Stanford University to explain our programs.

In my free time, I have visited Sacramento, which is the capital of California; I took my bike on the train and cycled through an interesting old town. On another cycling trip, I cycled along the beautiful San Francisco Bay coastline to get to an exciting Giants baseball game. I am touring the Bay Area on my bike.

Before coming to JSPS, I worked at Hirosaki University. My job in the university international department sparked my interest in collaborating with other universities. In the future, I look forward to connecting with many more American Universities. In my role, I hope more American students and faculty will be able to experience a high-level academic research opportunities in Japan. Also, they will be introduced to the very interesting and unique culture of Japan.

I look forward to meeting our newsletter readers as I explore different places in the US.

Manabu Ikeda

Deputy Director
August 2023 - August 2025

Since arriving in the Bay Area in August 2023, two years have flown by in the blink of an eye. Living here has been an invaluable and unforgettable experience for me. I was immediately struck by how friendly the local people are, how pleasant the climate is, and how delicious the food is—this truly is a wonderful place to live.



It has been incredibly inspiring to meet and connect with so many people here, including hardworking Japanese researchers and many others from around the world. These encounters gave me a real sense of how vast and diverse the world is.

Although my own contributions to this office may have been modest, I gained so much in return. I would like to express my deepest gratitude and respect to everyone I had the pleasure of getting to know here.

I'm especially thankful to my family, who always made our life here joyful; to Director Nakabeppu and Abby, whose energetic support meant so much; and to all of you who made this experience so meaningful.

As I return to my home institution, Tokyo University of Science, I hope to put the lessons and experiences I gained here to good use, and continue contributing to society and the people around me. Thank you very much.

NEWS FROM JAPANESE UNIVERSITIES

International Research Center for Japanese Studies (Nichibunken)



International Research Center
for Japanese Studies

The exhibition “Maternal Health and Images of the Body in Japanese Ukiyo-e” is being held at the Kalmanovitz Library of the University of California, San Francisco (UCSF) from November 1st, 2023 through the end of September 2025. Professor Manami YASUI, a cultural anthropologist working at the International Research Center for Japanese Studies (Nichibunken) in Kyoto, organized it as the project leader.



At the UCSF Library, (from left) Ms. Alicia Murasaki, Assistant Vice Chancellor of UCSF, Professor Manami YASUI of Nichibunken, and Ms. Polina Ilieva, Librarian at UCSF.



The exhibition is the outcome of joint research conducted by Nichibunken and UCSF, and it can be enjoyed as an online museum in English, Japanese, and Chinese.

https://www.nichibun.ac.jp/online/ucsf_maternal_health/

From January 31st, 2024, to May 31st, 2025, the online museum attracted visitors from more than 70 countries and regions around the world. The exhibition examines how women and their families experienced pregnancy and childbirth in early modern Japan, and introduces how Japanese at the time thought about birth control methods such as abortion and infanticide (called *mabiki*, or “thinning out”).

The Exhibition Project Team chose a selection of ukiyo-e artworks from the 1820s to the 1880s, primarily from the Japanese woodblock print collections of UCSF and Nichibunken. The exhibition features rare ukiyo-e prints that depict scenes of childbirth, including of the exact moment the child emerges.

Another highlight of the exhibition was the anatomical drawings. During the Edo period, European anatomy books, such as Johann Remmelin’s *Catoptrum Microcosmicum* (1619), were translated from Dutch (*Pinax Microcosmographicus*, 1667) to Japanese. Copies of Remmelin’s original (from the UCSF and McGill University collections) and translated Japanese editions (from the Nichibunken collection) show just how the publishers painstakingly printed organs on small paper flaps in order to represent the bodies of men and women, as well as reproductive organs such as the uterus. Concurrent with this introduction of European anatomical knowledge, there also circulated ukiyo-e depicting comical images of the body, which were popular among the masses.

The Exhibition Project Team encourages you to enjoy these diverse images of pregnancy, childbirth, and the body from the Edo period through to the late nineteenth century.

Nichibunken was founded in 1987 in Kyoto, Japan, aiming to pursue interdisciplinary and comprehensive research on Japanese culture from an international perspective.

Please check the website for more information.

<https://www.nichibun.ac.jp/en/>

A University Committed to Peace: Hiroshima University's Global Peace Education and Exchange Initiatives



HIROSHIMA UNIVERSITY

2025 marks 80 years since the atomic bombing in Hiroshima. Founded in 1949 in the A-bombed city, Hiroshima University (HU) is a national university that upholds “The Pursuit of Peace” as its foremost guiding principle. Since its establishment, the university has consistently worked toward the realization of lasting peace through education, research, and collaboration with society.

Global Dialogue for Peace: The University Presidents for Peace Conference

As part of its commitment to peace, HU will host the Fourth University Presidents for Peace Conference on August 6th, 2025, at its Higashi-Senda Campus in Hiroshima City. First launched in 2024, the conference brings together presidents and vice presidents from universities around the world to discuss the role of higher education in achieving a sustainable and peaceful world. To date, more than 20 universities have participated in this series of conferences.

At HU, we believe dialogue is one of the most powerful tools for building peace. As a university founded in the aftermath of the atomic bombing, we aim to work together with global university leaders to explore pathways toward sustainable peace.



A scene from the Third University Presidents for Peace Conference, which brought together representatives from 12 universities across 11 countries.

Peace Through Music: Peace Charity Concert

On August 5th, HU will host a special Peace Charity Concert at its Higashi-Hiroshima Campus to commemorate 80 years since the atomic bombing.

The concert will feature a special performance by world-renowned opera singer Michie Nakamaru, along with choral and instrumental performances by faculty, students, and alumni from the School of Education's Program in Music Education. Proceeds from ticket sales will be used to sponsor the next generation of global leaders to attend the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Ceremony on August 6th.

Peace Study Tour 2025: Global Youth Learning in Hiroshima

From August to September, HU will welcome over 140 students from 17 countries for its annual Peace Study Tour. Through lectures, fieldwork, attendance at the Peace Memorial Ceremony, and talks by atomic bomb survivors, the program offers participants a deeper understanding of peace and today's global challenges.

This year's special guest speaker will be Toshiyuki Mimaki, president of Nihon Hidankyo, a group that lobbies governments worldwide to abolish nuclear weapons and which was awarded the 2024 Nobel Peace Prize. Drawing from his own experiences, he will deliver a special lecture to participants.

Through these various initiatives, HU aims not only to preserve the memory of the past 80 years but also to take responsibility for shaping a more peaceful future through education, research, and global dialogue.



Check out the new JUNBA (Japanese University Network Bridging the Americas) LinkedIn Page!



The [JUNBA LinkedIn](#) page is now live! Please take a look at it. The mission of JUNBA is to assist Japanese universities with the enhancement of education and research activities and the creation of new businesses opportunities. JUNBA aims to attain this mission by facilitating internationalization movements at Japanese universities, supporting the training of university students and personnel, and promoting the development of academia-industry relationships between Japan and the Americas. The current members include J.F. Oberlin University, The University of Osaka, Kagoshima University, Tohoku University, Nagoya University, Yokohama City University, Waseda University, Ryukoku University, Kobe University, Okinawa Institute of Science and Technology, Institute of Science Tokyo, University of Tokyo, Kyoto University, Ritsumeikan University, Kyushu University, and Fukuoka Institute of Science. JSPS (Japan Society for the Promotion of Science) San Francisco Office joined as a secretariat office to promote the activities of JUNBA.



JSPS FELLOW IN U.S. - 1

Yusuke Miyashita

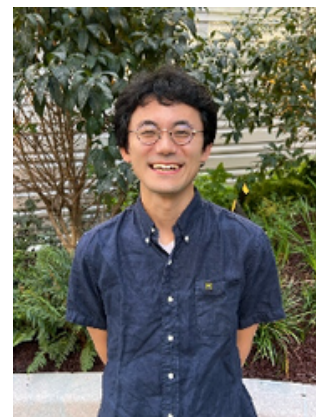
Education and research / professional experience

2011 M.D., Faculty of Medicine, Kumamoto University

2011-2022 Resident and Clinical Fellow (Pediatrics), Hospitals in Kumamoto Prefecture

2022 Ph.D., Department of Immunology, Graduate School of Medical Sciences, Kumamoto University

2023.8-2025.7 JSPS Overseas Research Fellow / Research Fellow, Department of Immunology, Boston Children's Hospital



Research Interest

When I worked as a medical doctor during my clinical fellow period, I cared for several pediatric patients with autoimmune diseases. I was deeply impressed to see these children, who had suffered not only from their diseases but also from side effects—especially those caused by steroids—regain their smiles after receiving appropriate therapy. This experience sparked my interest in autoimmune diseases and led me to pursue research in immunology.



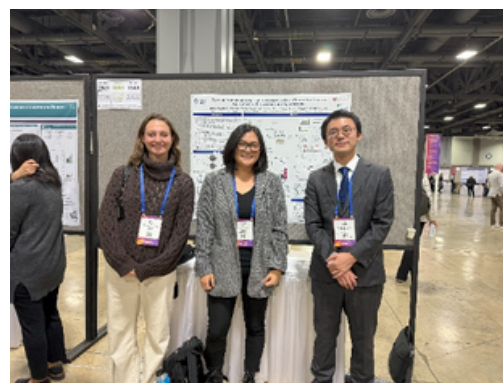
Chang Lab members

Q1. Why did you decide to research in the U.S.?

I am very interested in autoimmune disease mechanisms, especially in recurrences mechanisms because it is difficult to assess the recurrence risk when we try to withdraw the treatment for autoimmune diseases. The Chang Lab at Boston Children's Hospital recently demonstrated that arthritis recurrences are mediated by CD8⁺ resident memory T (TRM) cells in the synovium by using mice models and human synovium samples. I wanted to investigate why these TRM cells form and remain in the arthritis joint, so I applied to work in the Chang Lab. Fortunately, I acquired a JSPS Overseas Research grant, and they accepted me to work together.

Q2. What is your impression of the research environment in the U.S.?

I realized several points that differ from in Japan since I started working in Boston. First, I have many opportunities to listen to seminars. Immunology seminars are held every Wednesday from September to April at Harvard Medical School. I can listen to talks of leading experts in the various fields of immunology, which is very helpful for my research fields. Second, I can listen to and talk with other field researchers about their work. There are some meetup events in Boston through SNS, and they were very impressive and interesting for me. Finally, I had many opportunities to meet not only researchers but also people from pharmaceutical companies. It was helpful to hear about their enthusiasm for how they achieve their missions to meet the needs of society. I would not have experienced this if I had stayed in Japan, and all of these experiences were very impressive for me.

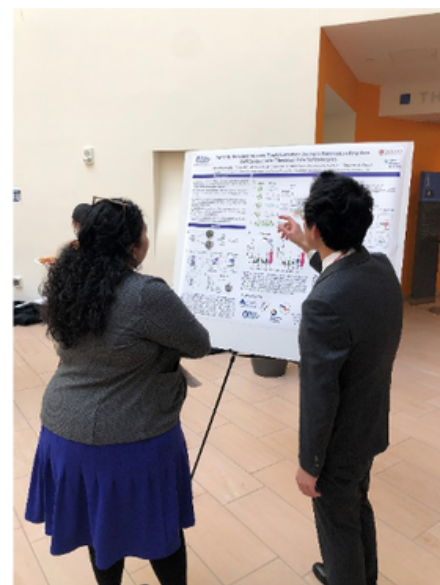


Poster Presentation: American College of Rheumatology in Washington, D.C.

Q3. How do you take advantage of your experiences in the U.S. and apply it to your research or career?

We conducted culture CD8 memory T cells within the synovium organoids for the first time in the world to pursue the changes in T cells within the arthritis joints. As a result, we have elucidated how CD8 TRM are formed in the inflamed joint, and we are currently compiling this into a paper. I believe that elucidating the mechanisms of relapses in autoimmune diseases and treating them will lead to the development of new therapies for autoimmune diseases, which have previously been impossible to cure. I would like to continue to leverage this experience and strive for research in Japan.

Lastly, I would like to express appreciation for the JSPS Overseas Research Fellowship program and related people. This program has given me the opportunity to conduct research in the United States and meet people in the various research fields. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the individuals associated with JSPS.



Poster Presentation: Japan-US Science Forum in Boston

JSPS FELLOW IN U.S. - 2 Shinya Yokomizo



2024 - Fellowship, Japan Society for the Promotion of Science

2022 - Postdoctoral Research Fellow, Department of Neurology, Massachusetts General Hospital (MGH) and Harvard Medical School (HMS)

2018 - 2022 Visiting Scholar, Department of Radiology, MGH and HMS

2015 - 2019 Research Assistant, Department of Radiation Effects Research, National Institute of Radiological Sciences, National Institutes for Quantum and Radiological Science and Technology (QST)

Self-Introduction

My research focuses on the pathophysiology of stroke and Alzheimer's disease, with a particular interest in how sleep impairments contribute to early disease progression. Using mouse models, optogenetics, and in-vivo fluorescence imaging, I aim to uncover early-stage disease mechanisms that could pave the way for personalized diagnostics and treatment strategies for neurodegenerative disorders.

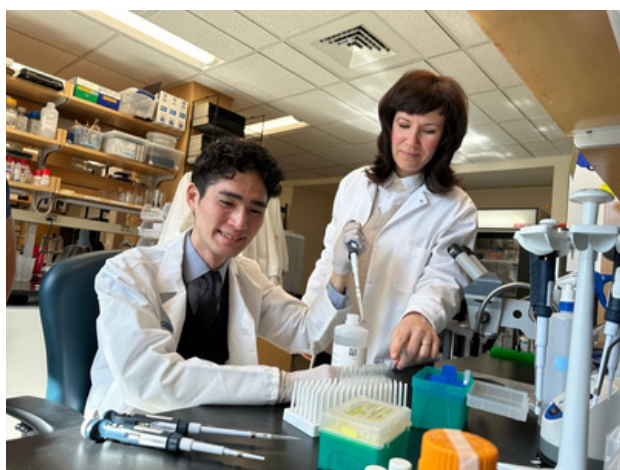


First came to Massachusetts General Hospital in 2018

Q1. Why did you decide to research in the U.S.?

I chose to pursue research in the U.S. because of the exceptional opportunities it offers for scientific growth. As a graduate student, I participated in a short-term research program at Massachusetts General Hospital (MGH), which left a lasting impression on me. With support from my PhD supervisor, I later received a long-term research opportunity at MGH. After completing my PhD, I joined Dr. Ksenia Kastanenka's lab, where I received strong post-doctoral mentorship from both Dr. Kastanenka and a co-mentor.

Their guidance enabled me to apply for the JSPS fellowship to further enhance my research skills and support my transition to an independent academic career. During this time, I shifted my research focus to Alzheimer's disease and sleep, areas that urgently need breakthroughs and where I saw the potential to apply my prior expertise. MGH was the ideal place for this transition. As an international hub for translational research, it provides access to advanced technologies, a global community of researchers, and valuable career development opportunities.



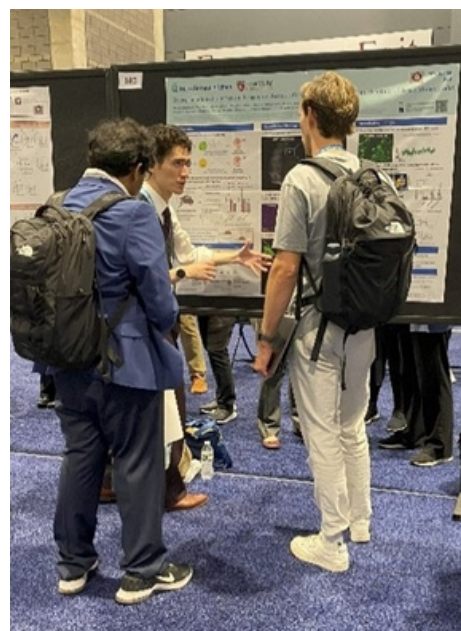
Picture with Dr. Ksenia Kastanenka (PI)

Q2. What is your impression of the research environment in the U.S.?

MGH is a Harvard-affiliated hospital and integrates collaboration between basic scientists and clinicians. In my current research group, over 20 principal investigators are conducting research on neurodegenerative diseases including Alzheimer's disease. As a postdoc, I benefit from working under multiple mentors and gaining experience across different research areas. We've also taken advantage of Harvard's coursework in areas like research ethics, grant writing, and science communication. The post-doctoral opportunity comes with high expectations; I need to manage my time well and present consistent results.

Q3. How do you take advantage of your experiences in the U.S. and apply it to your research or career?

To be honest, I don't feel I've fully tapped into all the opportunities yet. But the JSPS fellowship has been essential for my research and career development. Over the past two years, I've been able to deepen my understanding of stroke and Alzheimer's under the guidance of mentors. One turning point was participating in the Alzheimer's FastTrack program organized by BrightFocus Foundation soon after starting my postdoctoral training. It exposed me to cutting-edge ideas from researchers across the U.S. I also gained research skills that will be crucial for driving my projects. Expanding my network at conferences like Society for Neuroscience and SPIE Photonics West during this stage will help me explore future collaborations, funding opportunities, and support my long-term academic career development.



Poster presentation at Society for Neuroscience



JSPS FELLOW IN U.S. - 3

Shunsaku Nagasawa

カリフォルニア大学バークレー校 Space Sciences Laboratory
 2024.04 – present: JSPS Overseas Postdoctoral Research Fellow
 2024.04 – present: Postdoctoral Scholar, Space Sciences Laboratory,
 University of California, Berkeley
 2022.03 – 2024.03: JSPS Research Fellowship for Young Scientists (DC2)
 2021.04 – 2024.03: JSR Fellowship, The University of Tokyo
 2019.10 – 2024.03: FoPM Fellowship (WISE Program), The University of Tokyo
 2019.04 – 2024.03: Ph.D., Department of Physics, The University of Tokyo



Profile Picture

Research Field

The universe may seem like a dark and quiet place, but it's full of explosive phenomena. Among them are cosmic rays—charged particles accelerated to extreme energies, nearly 10 million times more energetic than particles from the most powerful accelerator on Earth. Where do they come from? How are they accelerated? To answer this century-old mystery, we develop cutting-edge X-ray and gamma-ray detectors and launch them aboard satellites and rockets.

Q1. Why did you decide to research in the U.S.?

During my Ph.D. program in Japan, I participated in sounding rocket experiments and satellite missions led primarily by UC Berkeley, contributing to the development of onboard sensors. As the launch date approached, I felt it was essential to gain hands-on experience in active development and testing directly on site. Moreover, the Space Sciences Laboratory (SSL) at UC Berkeley brings together not only world-leading theorists in high-energy astrophysics but also highly skilled engineers, creating an ideal environment for both advanced instrumentation development and in-depth analysis of observational data through interdisciplinary collaboration.

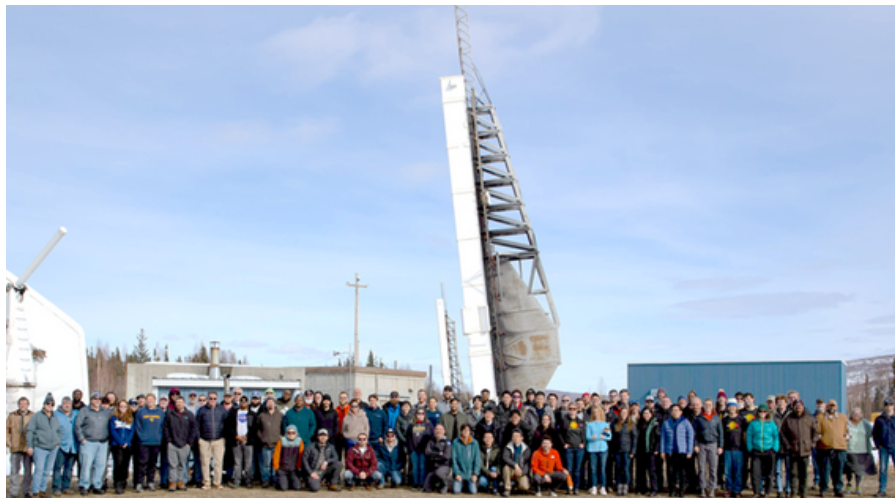


Photo with FOXSI-4, Hi-C Flare, NSROC and NASA teams at the Poker Flat Research Range in Alaska.

Q2. What is your impression of the research environment in the U.S.?

One of the strengths of the U.S. research environment is its diversity, not only in nationality, but also in academic background and perspective. In Japan, I mainly worked with Ph.D. students and researchers in physics. In contrast, at the Space Sciences Laboratory, even second- and third-year undergraduates actively contribute to research. Many of them are not only from physics but also from fields such as computer science and engineering, and there are structured programs in place that actively encourage their participation. Working with such motivated students with diverse viewpoints has been both stimulating and educational.

I was also impressed by the strong presence of women in physics here. While female participation in this field remains limited in Japan, nearly half of the students and researchers I've worked with in the U.S. are women, and they are highly active in all aspects of research. In addition, administrative support for international researchers is well-established, helping create an inclusive and collaborative environment where people from around the world can engage in their research.

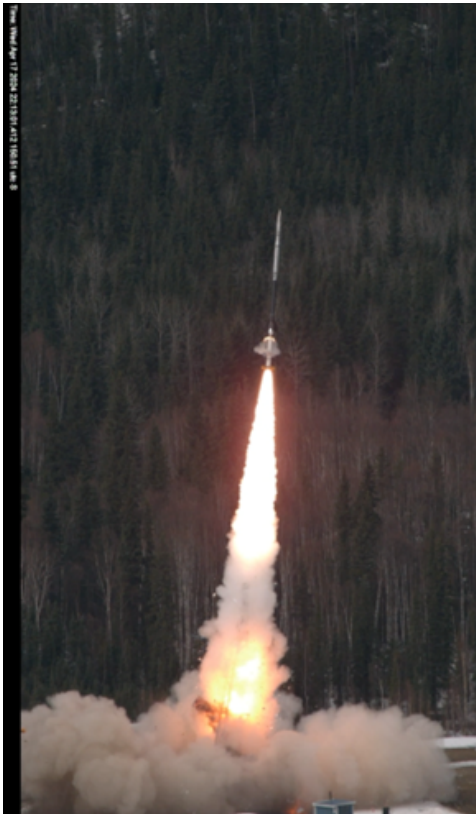
I've also come to feel a cultural difference in mindset. The U.S. research community tends to be optimistic and embraces challenges without fear of failure, which is inspiring. However, at times this optimism can feel a bit excessive, especially when careful task scheduling and risk assessment are needed.

Q3. How do you take advantage of your experiences in the U.S. and apply it to your research or career?

The postdoctoral period is a crucial stage for establishing myself as an independent researcher. During this time, I have had the invaluable opportunity to participate closely in the launch operations and post-flight analysis of FOXSI-4, a solar sounding rocket mission with the detector I developed during my Ph.D. program.

The mission successfully launched and achieved the world's first X-ray imaging spectroscopy of a solar flare. I am currently working on analyzing the flight data and constructing the response functions to extract cutting-edge scientific results.

Building on this experience, I am actively involved in preparations for the next flight, FOXSI-5, scheduled for launch between winter 2025 and spring 2026. This work involves identifying areas for improvement, conducting component tests, and supporting launch readiness. Additionally, the expertise I have gained has enabled me to contribute to NASA's upcoming MeV gamma-ray satellite, COSI, planned for launch in 2027. I am now engaged in developing its background monitor and signal processing system. Through these projects, I have had the privilege of collaborating with diverse teams across institutions and gaining hands-on experience in multiple phases of rocket and satellite development. These experiences will be invaluable when I return to Japan and lead my own observational satellite missions as an independent researcher.



*FOXSI-4 Rocket Launch – April 17th, 2024
(Credit: FOXSI-4 Team)*

I am doing basic research as a postdoctoral associate in the Department of Pathology at Weill Cornell Medicine. I graduated from the Faculty of Medicine at Kyoto University in 2011. After 7 years of clinical training as a general surgeon, I returned to Kyoto University to work on the basic science related to intestinal diseases under the supervision of Dr. Kazuhiro Iwai.

My graduate research topic was to investigate how linear ubiquitination regulates intestinal homeostasis. I discovered cell-type-specific roles of linear ubiquitination in epithelial cells and macrophages under inflammatory conditions and finally received a PhD in 2023. I have been living in New York since April 2024.

Q1. Why did you decide to research in the U.S.?

I had long wanted to live and work in the U.S., especially because the U.S. is ranked the top tier in basic medical science with high-impact publications coming from the U.S. Also, as a medical doctor, I had wanted to study how colorectal cancer initiates and progresses in the human body because the former topic was intestinal inflammation, not cancer. The collaborator I worked with in the graduate studies introduced me to the current laboratory, where they are focusing on the roles of aPKCs in the colorectal cancer field. I thought this was a valuable opportunity to study in the U.S. and advance colorectal cancer research.

Q2. What is your impression of the research environment in the U.S.?

In general, the research environments in the U.S. are considered to provide more independent thinking and operate with less rigid hierarchy compared to those in Japan, but it depends on the laboratories. In fact, my current lab is more hierarchical and strictly guided by our PIs. I think this structured approach is effective to complete large-scale projects, especially in relatively big laboratories because the funding, the number of human samples and pharmaceutical collaborations, and the strains of mice, etc, tend to be huge, which requires meticulous administration (Figure 1).



Figure 1: The interior in our laboratory. We have 2 PIs, 2 assistant professors, 8 postdocs and 1 technician. We share 12 benches in our whole laboratory.



Figure 2: Upper Left: Weill Cornell Medicine Belfer Research Building (My building)
 Upper Right: Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center - Zuckerman Research Center
 Bottom: Rockefeller University

In our university, you can enjoy many opportunities to attend live lectures by leading researchers in the U.S., which facilitates potential collaborations with them. Also, the research environment is highly international with many postdocs and researchers from various countries. Weill Cornell Medicine is located next to the Rockefeller University and the Sloan Kettering Memorial Cancer Center, which makes it easy to have friends from those facilities (Figure 2). This environment also offers valuable chances to get to know many researchers and their diverse backgrounds.



Figure 3: Laboratory members at the Rockefeller University Cafeteria.
I'm the second one to the right in the 1st row.

Q3: How do you take advantage of your experiences in the U.S. and apply it to your research or career?

Now, my specific research field in the U.S. is to reveal the mechanisms underlying the initiation and progression of mesenchymal colorectal cancer. Through this current project, I have gained valuable skills and knowledge in cancer biology and research methodology. In my future career, I will apply my experience to address unmet needs I will encounter as a surgeon scientist, and contribute to the advancement of cancer treatment. Also, I am able to build some research networks with researchers during this postdoctoral training (Figure 3). I believe these international connections will help me continue global collaborative research throughout my career.

JSPS FELLOW IN U.S. - 5

Sho Watanabe

May 2024 – present JSPS Overseas Postdoctoral Research Fellow

May 2023 – present: Postdoctoral associate, Department of Bioengineering, Rice University

April 2020 – March 2023: JSPS Graduate Research Fellow (DC1)

April 2020 – March 2023 Ph.D., Department of Applied Biological Chemistry, The University of Tokyo

My ambition is to help create a world where all diseases are curable. As a postdoctoral researcher in Dr. Szablowski's lab at Rice University, I am developing a new non-invasive technology that enables safe and ethical investigation of brain function in large animals. It's been just two years since I moved to the United States, and the experience has been incredibly enriching. I've had the opportunity to pursue exciting research, connect with people from diverse cultural backgrounds, and grow through both challenges and successes—all made possible thanks to the generous support of JSPS.

Q1. Why did you decide to research in the U.S.?

From a professional perspective, it was natural for me to pursue a postdoctoral position in the U.S., where significant advances have been made in the field of biomedical engineering. After getting my Ph.D., I determined decided to work on developing technologies that address unmet medical needs. I was particularly drawn to a research project led by my current PI, which demonstrated noninvasive manipulation of memory through molecular engineering (Szablowski JO., et al., Nature Biomedical Engineering 2019). The research initially seemed almost like an illusion, but it was also super cool; it deeply inspired me to work on innovative biomedical tools for future therapies.



2025 Synthetic Biology: Engineering,
Evolution, & Design (SEED) Conference



*Picture of lab retreat at Galveston beach.
On the right is my PI, Dr. Szablowski.*

From a more personal perspective, I've long been a huge fan of the American sitcom *The Big Bang Theory*. In the show, the main characters—postdocs at Caltech—dedicate their lives to science while enjoying close friendships, tackling challenges, and spending time together despite their different backgrounds. Watching them cultivated strong aspirations of spending my postdoc life in the U.S. Now, my own postdoc life has begun to resemble that of the show: I've found a supportive community of friends, and we often hang out, work out together, and share ideas. This environment continues to give me motivation, inspiration, and, of course, great joy.

Q2. What is your impression of the research environment in the U.S.?

I feel a great sense of freedom conducting scientific research in the U.S., both in terms of time and financial support. As a postdoctoral researcher, I can dedicate my full energy to my research project because basically, there are no specific classes or duties to do, and making progress in my project is a critical role for a postdoc. Therefore, it is truly a pleasure to take most of my time for just what I want to tackle. My PI, who is also in the early stages of his career, actively supports not only my current research and fellowship applications but also my long-term career development. As the person who took the risk of making the big field transition from muscle physiology to neuroscience and bioengineering, his thoughtful mentoring supported me in building up my projects from scratch.

Q3. How do you take advantage of your experiences in the U.S. and apply it to your research or career?

I strongly feel the necessity to develop a diverse set of skills to thrive in academia. I intend to make the most of my postdoctoral period by gaining experience not only in research but also in communication, networking, presentation, and mentorship, etc... Sometimes, it makes me feel overwhelmed to get skilled in all of them, but I'm enthusiastic to keep practicing and learn them from many respectful scientists gathering to this country. I believe these trainings will lead me toward a more fulfilling and dynamic career path.



*Team Photo of Track & Field Club that I
belong to in Houston*

JSPS FELLOW IN U.S. - 6

Yuta Nakagawa



I am a postdoctoral fellow at the Di Carlo Lab (<https://www.biomicrofluidics.com/>), Department of Bioengineering, University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA). Current projects include developing novel platforms for analyzing functional outputs of single cells such as secretion and proliferation. Keywords: microfluidics, droplet microfluidics, flow cytometry, single-cell analysis, lab-on-a-particle.

May 2024 ~ Present Postdoctoral Fellow, University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA)
 JSPS Overseas Postdoctoral Fellow

April 2023 ~ March 2024 Postdoctoral Fellow, Department of Chemistry, The University of Tokyo
 JSPS Postdoctoral Fellow (PD)

April 2020 ~ March 2023 Ph.D., Department of Chemistry, The University of Tokyo
 JSPS Research Fellow (DC2)

April 2018 ~ March 2020 Masters, Department of Chemistry, The University of Tokyo

Sept. 2013 ~ May 2017 Bachelor of Art, Skidmore College, New York, USA.

Q1. Why did you decide to research in the U.S.?

Joining the Di Carlo Lab at UCLA, which is one of the pioneering laboratories in the bioengineering field especially in microfluidics, was unequivocally the main motivation for coming to the U.S. as a postdoctoral researcher. I first met Professor Di Carlo when I was a graduate student at Professor Keisuke Goda's lab at The University of Tokyo, where we have collaborated on developing high-throughput cell sorting technologies. Through our collaboration, I was inspired by his visionary yet practical mindset in bridging the real-world needs of life sciences and medicine with engineering solutions. I also resonated with his mission of improving the accessibility of these next-generation technologies which typically rely on instrumentation or operation that requires significant expertise that hinders general usability. I proactively sought to foster communication with Prof. Di Carlo and the members of the lab throughout my collaborations with them, and a two-week stint as an intern at the Di Carlo lab in the summer of 2022 where I met many of the current lab members only reinforced my desire to join the lab.



Image 1 - Attending microTAS conference with lab members (October, 2024)

Q2. What is your impression of the research environment in the U.S.?

There are a couple of impressions that I have of the research environment in the U.S. First is the astounding diversity in the background in academic discipline and career paths from which students and faculty come from. When I was in Japan, most students joined graduate school programs right after their undergraduate studies, including myself. In contrast, I have met more people who have had years of industrial experience or non-STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) professions prior to joining graduate schools in the U.S. It seems that this additional experience provides fresh perspective on identifying real-world problems to tackle in the labs.



Image 2 0 Sunrise at Joshua Tree National Park with lab members (October, 2024)

Somewhat related to my first point, the second impression is that many researchers, including students and faculty, have strong entrepreneurial mindsets. They are output-driven beyond conference presentations and journal manuscripts, always keeping a long-term vision for actually delivering the technologies developed in labs to those in need. As a result, a larger portion of the graduate students pursue startups and entrepreneurship as their career path compared to Japan. There are also infrastructures to further nurture and support these entrepreneurship aspirations, such as Magnify at UCLA, which provides various resources like lab spaces to UCLA-born startups.

Q3. How do you take advantage of your experiences in the U.S. and apply it to your research or career?

In the past year, I had the opportunity to collaborate with some of the leading researchers in their respective fields spanning from engineering to medicine, all within the same UCLA campus. Having a network of colleagues and collaborators who hold me accountable and brings out the best out me undoubtedly have made me a better scientist as we strive to meet the expectations and demands of the increasingly interdisciplinary and rigorous scientific endeavor at the nexus of cutting-edge engineering tools and high-impact biomedical issues such as fibrosis and cancer.

Overall, it has been a humbling experience to have met many mentors, mentees, colleagues, and perhaps most importantly, friends. All of these experiences and networks will be vital as I continue to pursue my academic interests in developing next-generation high-throughput and accessible tools that are useful and impactful in various fields of biomedicine. I am excited for what comes next in my remaining time as a JSPS Fellow!

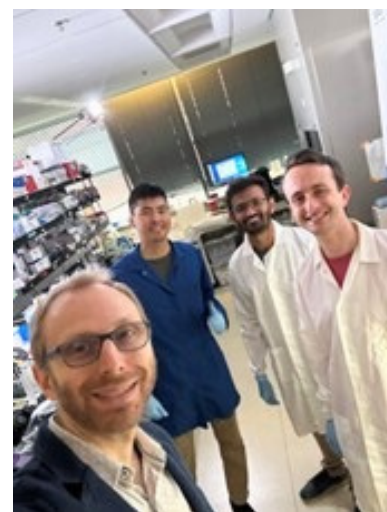


Image 3 - In the lab with Professor Di Carlo (left) and members of the lab (May, 2025)



Graphic Courtesy of Canva

Liaison Note

International Students in the United States

Abigail Hughes
Liaison Officer

In the US, due to the recent US administration's policy changes and actions, it is a tumultuous time for all students. At least \$11 billion has been cut or frozen in federal research funding.¹ Read this article by NPR's Emily Nadworny² to get a clear scope of the administration's effects on the US higher education sphere, and Karin Fischer of the Chronicle of Higher Education³ always has her finger on the pulse of international higher ed., however, I want to target a few crucial points here.

In a recent proposal,⁴ the administration targeted the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA). In the proposal for this department, many of the budgets for fellowships that support US students studying abroad were completely cut, resulting in a 93% decrease in funding. In Fiscal Year 2024, the Fulbright-Hayes fellowship had a budget of \$10.3 million. The Fulbright-Hayes fellowship is one of the major vehicles in which US students, graduates, and young professionals are able to experience a study abroad adventure. The Fulbright Program, that the Fulbright-Hayes fellowship is a part of, awards approximately 8,000 grants annually. According to an archived page of Fulbright's, "roughly 1,600 U.S. students, 4,000 foreign students, 1,200 U.S. scholars, and 900 visiting scholars receive awards, in addition to several hundred teachers and professionals."⁵ In essence, many scholars in various fields conduct research abroad or come to the US in a system quite akin to JSPS. In the proposal, its Fiscal Year 2026 budget was reduced to \$0. NAFSA (NAFSA: Association of International Educators) argues that the Fulbright-Hayes fellowship should instead receive \$11 million. At the time of writing this article, many of those who received the scholarship and were supposed to be conducting their Fulbright experience in the summer of 2025, instead of receiving approval notices, received rejection letters. In at least one instance, some of a country's approved scholars who have been conducting research on climate change and diversity, equity and inclusion, had their Fulbright acceptance blocked.⁶ The entire board of the Fulbright program has resigned, and they argue that the State Department has no authority to cancel the funding.

Each year, roughly one million international students coming into the country generate \$43 billion dollars in the economy. International students are concerned about their visas being revoked or not being allowed into the country at all. Up until recently, visa vetting of international students was paused, making it difficult for students to start their lives in the US. There is now a ban on visitors from fifteen different countries being able to come to the US, and the administration is considering preventing thirty-six more.

Visiting Assistant Professor of Finance at Texas A&M, Dr. Andrew Fieldhouse, notes in his article for the Conversation, that the US will inevitably miss out on economic growth if federal research dollars are not allocated to spur development. "Our research suggests that the U.S. economy will be less innovative and productive – and Americans will be worse off for it – if Congress agrees to deep cuts to science and research funding."⁷

Furthermore, other countries are becoming wary of sending their students to the US, due to the current administration. For example, Malaysia is in contact with the 266 students currently in the US under the Malaysian governmental program in various institutes and is considering transferring them to other countries, if possible. For their next round in funding, they are considering sending them to other countries such as Australia or Japan.⁸

While this is clearly detrimental to the US, I believe that there is a silver lining in all of this. In all accounts, my personal belief is that the administration, in changing policies and programs to have it align with its designs, is making the US a less hospitable environment for research and researchers. However, the US' loss is the gain of other countries. Now is the time for more international information dissemination, more funding towards international scholars being able to conduct research abroad, more fellowships given to students who will be crucial in the furthering of collaboration between countries going forward.



*Sharing Information of JSPS Programs to
Butantan Institute in Brazil*

Many countries are beginning to attract the students that have been turned away from the US, and even American researchers as well. I am excited to hear about Japanese universities opening their doors to American researchers. And though it pains me that students might be avoiding or unable to reach the US for study abroad experiences, this creates opportunity for other countries to attract study abroad applicants. All the information in this article, written in late June 2025, is subject to change, due to the unpredictable nature of this time.

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- ⁸ Malaysia to stop sending its scholarship students to the US. (2025, June 4). University World News. Retrieved June 12, 2025, from <https://www.universityworldnews.com/post.php?story=20250604131453670>



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開催概要

- 日時：2025年8月23日(土) 12:15~16:35 (PDT)
15:15~19:35 (EDT)
8月24日(日) 4:15~ 8:35 (日本時間)

- 内容：ポスターセッション、コミュニティ紹介等
※研究者の皆様は是非ポスターセッションにご参加ください。
- 開催形式：ONLINE (SPATIAL CHAT)
- 参加費：無料

参加方法

- 参加登録フォームからご登録をお願いします。
登録締切 7月10日(木) 17:00 (PDT)

参加登録フォーム



- ※ポスターセッションでの発表は申込先着順で定員(60名)とさせていただきます。
- ※ポスターセッションを聴講するには、発表者以外の方(発表しない共同著者を含む)も参加登録が必要です。
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(受賞対象者：ポスターセッション発表者のうち、学生~ポスドクに限る)
- ※ポスターは、スクリーンショットなど、撮影されても問題のないものにしてください。
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その他

- アメリカ大陸に滞在中あるいは今後渡航予定であり、大学、研究機関、企業に所属し、日本語でコミュニケーションを取ることができる方であれば国籍を問わずご参加いただけます。
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