

JSPS SAN FRANCISCO NEWSLETTER

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PAST EVENTS

31st Gathering of JSPS Fellows from Japan in the U.S. and 11th Meeting for Japanese University Faculty Members in the U.S.



JSPS San Francisco held the 31st gathering of JSPS fellows from Japan on January 30, 2016 at the Berkeley City Club. The gathering is held two to three times a year for researchers participating on the Postdoctoral Fellowships for Research Abroad program, Research Fellowships for Young Scientists program, and other JSPS programs promoting the international mobility of excellent young researchers. The 11th meeting of Japanese university faculty members in the U.S. was held jointly this time, and 33 researchers, including 18 JSPS fellows, attended the event.

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The meeting opened with a warm greeting from Prof. Masayuki Izutsu, Director of JSPS San Francisco. This was followed by a lecture on the latest research on dark matter, or unknown components of the universe, by special guest speaker Dr. Hitoshi Murayama, MacAdams Professor of Physics, University of California, Berkeley/Director, Kavli Institute for the Physics and Mathematics of the Universe (KAVLI IPMU). Dr. Murayama presented his lecture in a way that was accessible to the audience, bringing everyone closer to an understanding of the source of the universe.



Audience at the symposium

After the lecture, 13 researchers introduced their current research activities, followed by a short Q&A session.

This event provided a valuable opportunity for researchers to network with colleagues from different fields, backgrounds, and career stages, sharing their experiences in the U.S. as well as views on their future research and career. The next gathering for JSPS Japanese fellows will be hosted by the JSPS San Francisco office in Summer 2016.



Dr. Murayama

First Japanese Researchers Network Conference

On January 30, 2016, JSPS San Francisco held a conference for West Coast-based Japanese researchers at the Berkeley City Club, with the aim of creating a space for researchers from different fields to exchange ideas and deepen their relationships with each other. The representatives of 17 research communities from Portland, Oregon to San Diego, California attended this first-ever event.

The conference opened with remarks by Prof. Masayuki Izutsu (Director of JSPS San Francisco), followed by a brief introduction, including an overview of activities, by each researcher community. Time was then given for an exchange of ideas on the management of each of these groups.



Discussion panel

Financial resources and financial sustainability were the main focus of the discussions, as participants exchanged ideas about financial management in terms of membership and status as a Non-Profit Organization (NPO), which is key to receiving funding from industry.

This conference provided participants with the rare opportunity to gather together in one place and openly discuss ideas, and it is our hope that the connections made and ideas exchanged will be extended to research communities in Japan, creating a bridge between research networks in the U.S. and Japan. JSPS San Francisco will continually support such conferences, promoting collaboration within the Japanese researcher network.



Audience at the symposium

Socially Engaged Art in Japan: A Joint Symposium of the University of Washington and the Japan Society for the Promotion of Science

For the first time ever on November 12-14, 2015, an all-star cast of scholars and artists from Japan, the U.S., and across the globe came together at the University of Washington (UW) to explore and discuss the cross-section between art and social activism, and how this cross-section is shifting, particularly in Japan.

JSPS San Francisco was proud to help sponsor this symposium, organized by Justin Jesty, Assistant Professor of Japanese at UW, and the UW Japan Studies Program. Experts from not only the art world but also economists, sociologists, and historians presented their works, provoking thoughtful debate and eager sharing of ideas in the panel sessions that followed. From discussions on the impact of art on the ageing population to policy governing art in Japan, the international, interdisciplinary nature of the collaboration allowed for development of new viewpoints among participants.

The importance of coming together in the same physical space was clear as discussions continued on into break times and mealtimes and free time, the 60+ participants taking every opportunity to connect with one another, with everyone who is anyone in the field of socially engaged art.

Everyone except for Kitagawa Fram, the headliner for the symposium, whose visa application was denied by the U.S. government two days before his scheduled arrival, allegedly due to concern over his participation in an anti-U.S. military protest over 50 years ago. Yet his absence only brought depth to the discussion, as it exemplified the impact of the socio-political climate on art and artists.

JSPS San Francisco looks forward to supporting similar symposiums in the future, promoting the improvement of society through research and collaboration across academic fields and national borders.



Panel presentation by Justin Jesty



Kanayo Ueda, Researcher,
Osaka City University



Justin Jesty, Symposium Organizer and
Assistant Professor,
University of Washington



Michael Swaine, Assistant Professor,
University of Washington

15th Workshop for Japanese University Administrative Staff in the U.S.

JSPS San Francisco held the 15th workshop for Japanese university administrative staff in the U.S. on January 29, 2016.

The purpose of this workshop is to provide a professional development and networking opportunity for administrative staff from Japanese universities currently working in the U.S. Sixteen participants from the following universities and ministries attended the workshop: Hiroshima University, Kagoshima University, Kyoto Institute of Technology, Kyoto University, Kwansai Gakuin University, the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT), Nagoya Institute of Technology, Nagoya University, National Astronomical Observatory of Japan, Niigata University, Tohoku University and the University of Tokyo.

The workshop started with a greeting from Prof.

Masayuki Izutsu, Director of JSPS San Francisco, followed by a lecture by Mr. Yuji Ide, President of US-Japan Forum. In his lecture, Mr. Ide presented about the significance of universities in society in terms of long-term function, such as providing basic research and fostering human resources for the future. He also shared his thoughts on a three-year plan to internationalize Japanese universities by changing the worldview of university administrative staff.

Participants were then divided into three groups to discuss how to utilize their experience in the U.S. after they go back to Japan. The workshop wrapped up with a summary of the group discussions and comments from Mr. Ide and Prof. Mitsuaki Nozaki, Director of the JSPS Washington D.C. office. Following the workshop, participants engaged each other in networking and free discussion about their career.



Mr. Ide



Workshop participants

JSPS Fellowship Information Booth at the AGU Fall Meeting 2015

JSPS held an information booth on fellowship programs at the AGU (American Geophysical Union) Fall Meeting in San Francisco from December 14 to 18, 2015. This was made possible thanks to the kind support of JpGU (Japan Geoscience Union). The AGU Fall Meeting is the largest earth and space science meeting in the world. This interdisciplinary event drew more than 25,000 attendees over five days, targeting researchers and businesspersons in the fields of earth and space science.

Although holding the booth at the AGU event was a first-time attempt for us, we ultimately proved that there are many prospective candidates for JSPS fellowship programs in the fields where Japan has the lead, that is, environmental problems and natural disasters. Many researchers visited our booth and asked detailed questions about eligibility, application procedures and fellowship terms.

Due to the success of the event, we are seriously considering holding an information booth again at the same event next year.

JSPS Fellowship Information Sessions at the University of Oregon and Oregon State University

JSPS fellowship information sessions took place at the University of Oregon (UO) and Oregon State University (OSU) on October 22 and 23, respectively. JSPS San Francisco holds information sessions regularly to promote JSPS fellowship programs for West Coast researchers.

The session at UO was made possible by support from Ms. Vidusha Devasthali, Research Development Administrator. The session at OSU was made possible by support from Ms. Patricia Hawk, Assistant Vice President, Sponsored Research and Award Administration.



Info session at OSU

At both sessions, senior researchers made up the majority of attendees. Following the presentation, attendees raised many questions about the details of the JSPS invitation programs, including eligibility information, application schedule, how to contact a prospective Japanese advisor, etc.

JSPS San Francisco concluded the session successfully and will continue to hold similar sessions across universities on the West Coast in hopes of receiving more applications.



Info session at UO

JSPS Fellowship Information Sessions at the University of Southern California and the University of California, Los Angeles

As part of an effort to increase the number of West Coast researchers at Japanese universities, JSPS San Francisco staff held information sessions about graduate-level research fellowships at USC and UCLA in fall 2015.

With the generous help of Mr. Chris Wiedey, Senior Executive Director of Corporate and Foundation Relations at USC, and Noel Shimizu, Assistant Director of the Terasaki Center for Japanese Studies at UCLA, the information sessions were successful, drawing a diverse cross-section of graduate students and professors interested in research collaboration in Japan.

While JSPS has an established relationship with USC and has held info sessions there in the past, this was the first held at UCLA, and featured a talk by JSPS alumna

Barbara Gaerlan, now Assistant Director of the UCLA Center for Southeast Asian Studies.

The session at USC was well-attended, and participants benefitted from alumni talks by recently-retired alumna Annette Rowe and USC Professor Duncan Williams, now Director of the USC Shinso-Ito Center for Japanese Studies. Both sessions allowed prospective fellowship applicants to ask questions, clarify details, and get a better sense of what participating on a JSPS fellowship is like.

For more information about JSPS fellowships for graduate research in Japan, please contact the JSPS San Francisco office (fellowships@jspsusa-sf.org) or visit our website (<https://www.jsps.go.jp/english/e-fellow/>).



Info session at USC



P. Barbara Gaerlan, UCLA



P. Duncan Williams, USC

NEWS FROM JAPANESE UNIVERSITIES



Bay Area visit of Humanware students from Osaka University

Kazufumi Hosoda, Associate Professor, Osaka University



Twenty graduate students from Osaka University (OU) visited the San Francisco Bay Area for a study tour from February 21-27. The students belong to the Humanware Innovation Program (HWIP), a five-year doctoral degree program established by three graduate schools of OU: Information Science and Technology, Engineering Science, and Frontier Biosciences. The purpose of HWIP is to educate future leaders to make novel innovations based on interdisciplinary research in the fields of information technology, cognitive/brain science, and life sciences. HWIP is an evolving and adaptive program, driven by intensive discussion among faculty and students, and respects student opinion by encouraging student-driven events. HWIP now has 65 students in total (grade 1-3 in 3 years) from various research fields, and received the highest evaluation in the category of information technology in the 2016 JSPS ranking of leading doctoral programs.

The idea for this study tour originally arose from our student's opinions. The students often go abroad individually, but seldom go as a large group. The aim of the tour was to learn about innovative research and entrepreneurship and to make international connections, allowing students to share experiences through on-site discussions. Also, our students had their own individual aims and the study tour included a day for student-driven activities.

Osaka University has a base in San Francisco, the North American Center (OU-NAC), which has been rapidly increasing cooperation with Bay Area educational institutions. Most recently, OU-NAC helped to establish the University of California Education Abroad Program (UCEAP) Office in Osaka. The Center's goals and functions are in line with HWIP's student-driven model, and OU-NAC designed and fully coordinated our tour. With the help of OU-NAC, we were able to visit the UC Berkeley Center for Information Technology Research in the Interest of Society (CITRIS) for a collaboration event; SunBridge, B-Bridge,

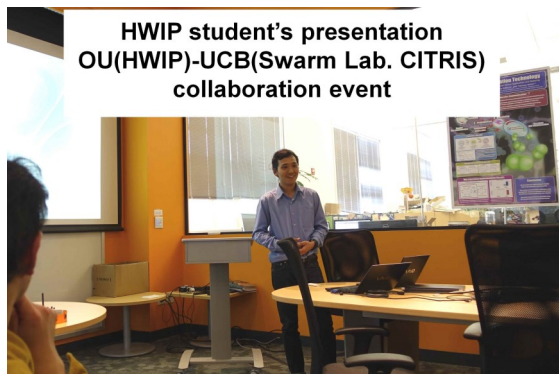
Spectrum Visions, Stanford University, and OU-NAC for special lectures; and Google, Make School, Salesforce, California Academy of Sciences, Consulate-General of Japan in SF, Computer History Museum, and 106 Miles Meetup for various individual student activities, such as office tours and interviews. OU-NAC also provided students with the opportunity to make connections with local Japanese people who have succeeded in the fields of industry, academia, and government in the Bay Area by hosting a mixer party.

HWIP students learned lots at each event. They discovered many new ways of thinking that are different from those in Japan, and discussed the pros and cons of these viewpoints. By integrating these ideas with their existing ideas, they were able to determine what new ways of thinking should be adopted in Japan, contributing to their future vision of Japan and the world.

Overall, the tour was a great success, and all of the students experienced great shifts in their world view, preparing them to become global leaders who will create a bright future. We thank everyone we met in the Bay Area for their kind help. We will continue to visit the Bay Area to learn more, to connect more, and to take advantage of everything there is to offer in this special place in the world. With the help of OU-NAC (<http://osaka-u-sf.org/en/contact/>), we hope to invite not only students but also others from the Bay Area to OU, whether for student-driven interdisciplinary research collaboration, international exchange events, or direct enrollment in HWIP, which offers a number of grants for qualified students.

For more information, please visit HWIP's website <http://www.humanware.osaka-u.ac.jp/en/>, or feel free to contact us at hosoda@humanware.osaka-u.ac.jp.

Acknowledgements: This study tour was supported by the JSPS Program for Leading Graduate Schools, "Humanware Innovation Program".



HWIP student's presentation
OU(HWIP)-UCB(Swarm Lab. CITRIS)
collaboration event



Osaka University SF Bay Area Mixer Party



Earthquake forecasts and early warning: progress in Japan and on the West Coast

Kyoto University Office of Global Communications
Anna Ikarashi and David Kornhauser
comms@mail2.adm.kyoto-u.ac.jp

In Japan, when shockwaves from a destructive earthquake are about to strike populations near the epicenter, the distinctive ringing of the national earthquake early warning (EEW) system alerts the public via television, mobile phones, and other media, often providing valuable moments of preparation.

On the West Coast of North America, where earthquakes also occur with some frequency, such early warning systems currently exist for industrial and corporate use (e.g. for major manufacturers, energy companies, transit systems, etc). But what about for the general public? And can earthquakes be forecast even further in advance?

Researchers from Kyoto University and the University of California, Berkeley addressed these questions recently in a February 12 session at the AAAS (American Association for the Advancement of Science) annual meeting in Washington DC. AAAS is the world's largest general scientific society, and is also the publisher of the prestigious academic journal, *Science*. This marked the first occasion on which a Japanese university was selected to host such a scientific session.

In the symposium entitled "Living with Earthquakes: Causes, Early Warning, and Damage Mitigation", Masumi Yamada and Yoshihiro Ito spoke for the Disaster Prevention Research Institute of Kyoto University, and Richard Allen presented for the Seismological Laboratory at UC Berkeley.

Ito's research focuses on measuring "slow slip" as a precursor to mega-quakes, which are slow movements observed along subduction zones near ocean-bottom faults. Ito places sensors along the ocean floor to gather

real-time data on these movements. In the session he showed that slow slip data could be a useful tool in forecasting imminent mega-quakes.

Yamada, one of the developers of Japan's EEW system, explained to the largely American audience how EEW works in Japan, and how people respond when they receive warnings. One of the most successful moments for EEW, she explained, was the alert sent out at the time of the 2011 Tohoku earthquake, which triggered emergency brakes in rail, elevator, and other systems in Tokyo and across the region, preventing major derailments or injuries in bullet trains. She also discussed challenges the system is now working to overcome, such as the reduction of false alarms.

Allen presented exciting news for North America: the launch of MyShake, an Android-based citizen science app, which could improve EEW on the West Coast and worldwide. Allen had previously developed ShakeAlert, the Californian equivalent to Japan's EEW system. MyShake collects seismic data from smartphone motion sensors, and could potentially be used to provide a form of EEW in regions of the world lacking extensive networks of seismic detectors.

Wrapping up the session, the speakers emphasized the rapid progress being made, as well as the depth of the challenges that remain and the basic need for improvements to damage-mitigating construction technologies.



A capacity crowd attended the AAAS session in Washington, DC

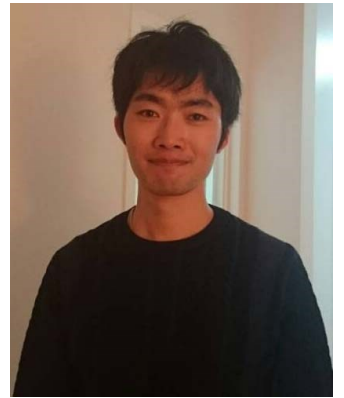


Session organizer David Kornhauser (left) and speakers Allen, Yamada, and Ito

INTERVIEW WITH A JSPS FELLOW IN THE U.S.

DR. GOUKI OKAZAWA

2015- | Postdoctoral fellow, Center for Neural Science, New York University
2015- | JSPS Postdoctoral Fellow for Research Abroad
2013- | Postdoctoral Fellow, National Institute for Physiological Sciences, Japan
2013 | Ph.D., The Graduate University for Advanced Studies (SOKENDAI), Japan
2011- | JSPS Research Fellow (DC2), The Graduate University for Advanced Studies (SOKENDAI), Japan
2008 | B.S., Faculty of Integrated Human Studies, Kyoto University



Gouki Okazawa studies neuroscience and received his Ph.D. (2013) from The Graduate University for Advanced Studies under the supervision of Prof. Hidehiko Komatsu. His primary interest is in brain mechanisms underlying the intelligent behavior of humans, such as visual recognition, decision making, and reasoning. His doctoral research focused on the brain's ability to visually recognize surface properties of objects (e.g. textures, surface gloss). He then joined Dr. Roozbeh Kiani's lab at New York University as a JSPS fellow. His current work focuses on mechanisms of deliberate decision-making based on complex visual information such as discrimination of objects and faces. His goal is to construct computational models that account for cognitive behaviors and to prove the models by experiments that measure behaviors and neural activities of humans and animals.



Why did you choose the U.S. to conduct your research?

I had always wondered why so many neuroscience labs in the U.S. constantly produce high-impact papers. I had never lived in foreign countries and held the stereotypic view that Japanese people work harder than others. I naively imagined that U.S. labs work efficiently because of rich, well-funded research facilities and technicians.

My first visit to the U.S. was a striking experience for me. It was during the fourth year of my Ph.D., and I attended the world's largest neuroscience meeting (called SfN) and also visited a lab. The SfN meeting was a huge event; over 30,000 people attended. What stuck in my mind, however, was not the number of people, but a weak presence of Japanese researchers. In domestic conferences in Japan, I saw many Japanese researchers actively presenting their works. At SfN, there were few to be found. The experience made me think about the status of Japan in the world.

The short visit to a lab also startled me. It was a productive lab, and people were working very hard; no lunch time, no tea break, no chattering. They first welcomed me, but soon got back to their jobs, and I did not even have time to hear about their research projects. It was not a typical example of labs in the U.S., but since then, I started to think seriously about how to be productive in science. I realized that there is no silver bullet for doing good science. One must work hard and work efficiently, or know other tricks. I should not have attributed the productivity of U.S. labs to rich facilities.

I am still seeking the best way to do good science, and certainly this is one of the driving forces that brought me to the U.S. My Ph.D. mentor and other senior researchers also strongly recommended me to come to the U.S., perhaps because they know that it is the best way to learn science.

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

I have noticed several differences between Japan and the U.S., although these impressions were obtained from only one year of experience in a U.S. lab. I am not sure whether my impressions can be generalized across different labs in the U.S., but here I would like to mention three things I have learned so far.

Being critical. As scientists, we believe that we are being critical, but we usually are not critical enough. When in Japan, I did try to be critical when I read papers, such as finding a discrepancy in data or pointing out a lack of control experiments. It was, however, far from being really critical. Our journal club here is intense. My boss “denies” a paper. Even when a paper is logically self-consistent, he points out a vulnerability of underlying assumptions and criticizes every detail. Behind those criticisms, he has a strong belief about what is good science; most papers in the world do not satisfy it.

Being logical. Again as scientists, we believe that we are logical, but it is good to know that we usually are not. I had a habit, for example, of adopting a data-analysis method simply because someone used it in previous papers. I also had a habit of interpreting data without paying much attention to statistical powers or the validity of underlying assumptions. Those illogical behaviors have been corrected through discussions in the lab. During those discussions, I have had many surprising experiences in which what I thought to be logically correct turned out to be completely incorrect. Also, American researchers tend to express a clear opinion. Having strong opinions results in a debate, and this ultimately leads to a better answer.

Being well written. I would also like to mention that, at least in my field, many U.S. researchers seem to put

great emphasis on writing. My boss even recommended me to read Hemingway’s novels to improve my writing skill. Writing papers is not simply a process of dictating data. A paper should clarify a conceptual advance obtained from the research, which requires skillful writing to summarize the tangled logic behind the study. There are many academic writing classes in the U.S. that help us learn how to write well.

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

The U.S. styles have certain benefits in terms of doing science, but it will not be easy to transfer those styles to Japan. In the U.S., I always confront cultural differences, try to immerse myself in the culture, and I can sometimes pretend as if I am a part of it. I am trying to be critical, trying to have strong opinions, and trying to use English well. This, however, does not mean that I have learned it. I was born and raised in Japan, and my way of thinking is deeply immersed in Japanese styles. If I find my next career in Japan, I may easily adapt back to Japanese styles again. In this sense, I would have to always make an effort to maintain what I have experienced here.

Living in a foreign country has been an invaluable experience for me. In the U.S., especially in New York, people from many cultural backgrounds gather together. As I have gradually become aware of differences between Japan and the U.S., I have started to look at Japan from an outsider’s perspective. I have also realized how much I have been supported by Japan, including my stipend now. I would like to truly express gratitude for the supports and hope that, in the future, I can contribute to science in Japan based on my experience.



OFFICE STAFF SWITCH

Farewell to Our Program Coordinators

Rika Nakashima (Nagoya Institute of Technology)

Working at JSPS San Francisco was a challenging experience for me. I was mainly in charge of accounting and came to have a deep understanding of accounting in the U.S. During my training at JSPS San Francisco, I got a chance to go to some universities in Boston, Oregon, and Guanajuato (Mexico) to present about JSPS fellowship programs for researchers.

In addition, supporting the activities of the Japanese researchers network and organizing gatherings for them gave me a good opportunity to gain knowledge of the higher education system in the U.S. After completing my training period at the JSPS San Francisco Office, I will return to Nagoya Institute of Technology. I would like to thank everyone at JSPS for the great experience of working here.

Kazuhiro Kosaka (Kyoto University)

It has been only a year since I came here but I love the San Francisco Bay Area just like my hometown. The Bay Area is a populous region, and yet it has lots of nature and wildlife within just a few miles.

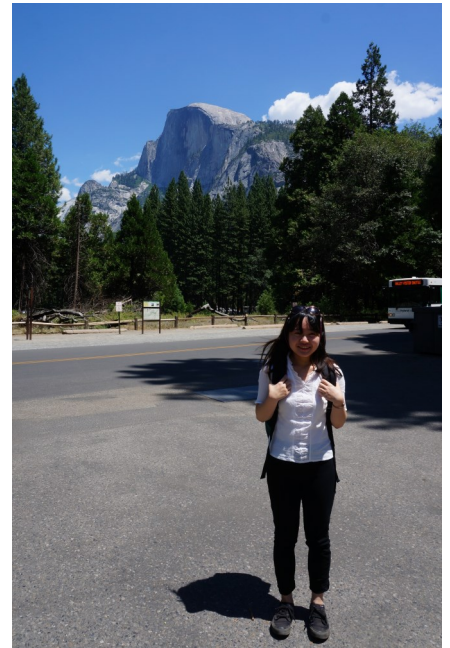


Running in the rolling hills of the Marin Headlands, where the landscape is embraced by the crystal clear sky and the blue ocean, I realized that this is where I belong, because it eases my heart. I also enjoyed saying hello to people I came across there. These memories are branded on my soul and make it feel bittersweet to leave.

As for my job here, having engaged in accounting for a long time in Japan before this training program, what I experienced here was absolutely a first-time experience. I had the chance to organize joint symposiums with the University of Washington and the University of Guanajuato in Mexico, and to hold several information sessions on JSPS fellowship programs aimed at researchers. Supporting the activities of the Japanese University Network in the Bay

Area (JUNBA) was also a main part of my work, allowing me to understand the barriers that may be confronted when Japanese universities establish branch offices in the U.S. Editing this office newsletter enabled me to learn how to write articles in English. Through my work here, I became conscious of the importance of having a good command of foreign language, especially English, and a deep understanding of cultural background, which are the keys to better international exchange. In addition, I had many opportunities to think over work-life balance in Japanese society and am groping for a way to improve the working environment in Japanese universities.

All of these experiences have broadened my mind and re-motivated me to work as a university administrative staff member. I would like to thank all of the people I worked with and my colleagues who always supported me.



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