



Japan Society of Northern California

President Position Description

Summary

The Japan Society of Northern California (“Society”) is seeking a new president with the capabilities and leadership to enable the Society to build on its recent success and capitalize on opportunities for growth. Under the leadership of its current president, Takahide Akiyama, and chief operating officer, Miho Greenberg, the Society has significantly expanded its programming; built up operating cash reserves; and executed on its mission as the go-to place for knowledge and insight on Japan and its relationship with the San Francisco Bay Area. Due to President Akiyama’s move back to Japan, the Society seeks a new president with strategic vision and action-oriented approach to build on that foundation and lead it on an exciting new phase of development and growth.

About the Japan Society of Northern California

Founded in 1905, the Society is the second-oldest Japan-America society in the United States. There are 36 such Societies nationwide which all operate autonomously. The Society benefits from the San Francisco’s unique, historic role in the U.S.–Japan relationship, starting with the first Japanese immigrants to the US mainland in the mid-19th century, the first Japanese diplomatic mission to the U.S. on the warship *Kanrin Maru* in 1860 and the establishment of Japan’s first overseas diplomatic mission, the Consulate General in San Francisco in 1870. San Francisco was also the site for the 1951 signing of the San Francisco Peace Treaty formally ending World War II and the Emperor’s visit to San Francisco in 1994.

The broader Bay Area is also home to multiple Japantowns and two former US ambassadors to Japan. Today the relationship is strengthened by a resurgent Japan’s focus on the Silicon Valley ecosystem of innovation and entrepreneurship. Former Prime Minister Abe’s visit in 2015 symbolized the importance of the Bay Area in Japan’s eyes and in the years following that visit, hundreds of Japanese companies opened offices and tech-scouting operations here. The Bay Area has more air travel with Japan than any other metropolitan area in the US. The Bay Area also hosts the headquarters of some of the largest American corporations, all of which have major operations and sales in Japan, including Apple, Google, Facebook, Cisco, Visa, Oracle, Intel and Salesforce.

The Society’s pillar programs include the Bay Area’s highest-ranked Japanese Language Program; the Annual Award of Honor Gala; the Japan-US Innovation Awards, organized in cooperation with the Stanford University US-Asia Technology Management Center, and the new US-Japan Health Connection initiative in collaboration with US-Japan

Medtech Frontiers. The Society also holds roughly three to four smaller programs a month, covering areas such as the Women's Impact Network; policy and security; food and culture; technology and innovation; and sports and youth-focused activities. The Society also supports a Young Professionals Group that conducts its own independent programming, including happy hours and career-oriented programming. In addition, through its branch in Japan the Society conducts programming for Japan-based members and the US-Japan business community.

Significant JSNC revenue contributors include the Gala, Innovation Awards, the Language Program, and corporate supporters. Significant corporate supporters include MUFG Union Bank; Dodge & Cox; Mitsubishi Corporation; Morgan Lewis; SunBridge Corporation, Salesforce, and NTT.

Operating Environment

The Society currently operates in a favorable market environment.

- In recent years, the San Francisco / Silicon Valley area has hosted visits from dignitaries including Prime Minister Shinzo Abe; First Lady Akie Abe (separately from the PM); Minister for Foreign Affairs (MoFA) Taro Kono; Minister of Economy, Trade and Industry (METI) Yoshihiro Seki; and the *Keidranren*, Japan's premier business association.
- The number of Japanese companies doing business in the Bay Area has swelled from 700 to 900 in the past five years, and Japanese companies and investors are aggressively investing in developing relationships with Bay Area companies and the Silicon Valley ecosystem.
- The Society has a strong working relationship with the Japanese Consulate General, including close ties to the Consul General and his staff, as well as JETRO San Francisco.
- The Society has cultivated relationships with the American Chamber of Commerce of Japan and the US Embassy and is the only Japan America Society in the US which has conducted high-impact programming in Tokyo, at the ACCJ and at the Ambassador's residence.

Thus, the board of the Society believes we are operating in a uniquely favorable environment with abundant opportunities to provide value to our constituents and grow as an organization.

Organizational Structure

The president reports to the board chair, currently Larry Greenwood. The board of directors comprises 35 members, from organizations such as the Asia Society; MUFG Union Bank, ANA and JAL; JETRO; Mitsubishi Corp; Morgan Lewis; Morrison Foerster; Squire Patton Boggs; Deloitte; WiL; Stanford and UC-Berkeley; plus a variety of service providers and entrepreneurs. Board members also include former non-profit executives from The Asia Foundation and the Pacific Pension and Investment Institute.

The Society staff currently comprises the President; Chief Operating Officer; Language Program Coordinator; one administrative staff member; a part-time programming staff member; and volunteers and contractors. The COO's efforts have greatly increased the Society's operating efficiency and ability to execute on programming and sponsorship opportunities. Increased efficiency and an improvement in the Society's financial situation provides a unique opportunity in the coming months and years for the Society to significantly expand its outreach and impact in pursuit of its mission to create even stronger grassroots support for the US-Japan relationship, by, for example, deepening our corporate support, cultivating high net worth individual supporters who have a strong affinity for Japan, and pursuing grants and foundation funding to further build out our content programming and Japanese Language Program.

Position Description

The President's role includes operational responsibilities, and support of internal and external stakeholders. Those are enumerated below.

- Drive the Society's content programming with the aim of making a measurable impact, especially in reaching and actively engaging significantly more individuals in the Bay Area, whether they have a passion for Japan or just a passing interest in Japan.
- Be the "face" of the Society and by extension Society members and stakeholders who have an interest in Japan and want to support friendship between Americans living in the Bay Area and Japanese. This includes close collaboration with the Consul General, other representatives of the Government of Japan, the city of San Francisco, and other Japan-related organizations such as the JCCNC, JCCCNC, and Asia Society.
- Act as "fund-raiser-in-chief" for the Society including cultivating, developing and maintaining corporate members, searching for corporate sponsors for pillar programs, and ensuring success of the annual Gala, the single largest fund-raising event of the year.
- Create the Society's annual business plan, gain approval by the Board of Directors and oversee successful implementation of that plan. Work with the Chair to conduct periodic strategic reviews of direction and priorities of the Society. In the

wake of the pandemic's impact and the arrival of a new President, we expect 2022 or early 2023 would be a good time for such a review.

- Prepare for Board meetings and participate in committee meetings, such as Finance, Programming, the Executive Committee, and Corporate Sponsorship, and program-specific committees such as the Gala Committee and Innovation Awards Committee.
- Manage HR and staffing of the Society, including managing and mentoring one direct report, the COO. The President approves the annual work plan, conducts the year-end performance review for the COO, and provides mentoring on an ongoing basis. The President works with the COO to assure that other Staff members and volunteers have annual work plans and annual performance reviews. The President further oversees the Society's effort to utilize volunteers from Japan and from local universities to augment its operational capabilities.

Annual goals will be established in collaboration with the Board Chair at the beginning of each year. Performance against those will be reviewed with the Chair at the conclusion of the year.

Commitment and Compensation

This is a full-time position. The Society has benchmarked market compensation for comparably sized Japan-America societies nationwide, and comparable organizations in the Bay Area. Our goal is to provide market-consistent compensation commensurate with candidate capabilities and experience.

Summary of Key Qualifications

Competencies

- Highly energetic, strong leadership skills, and results-oriented approach to work.
- Ability to synthesize a broad range of information, to analyze and incorporate it into strategy for the Society, and to articulate and execute that strategy.
- Good communication skills in public settings, including moderating of programs, speeches and greetings at Japan-related events, and interface with American and Japanese media.
- Ability to work flexibly in a fluid work environment. The Japan Society is a small non-profit where everyone needs to pitch in and help.
- Marketing skills to increase attendance for programs.
- Financial acumen including familiarity with P&L, balance sheets and budgeting.

Experiences

- Strong cross-cultural, Japan-U.S. professional experience/accomplishment in the corporate, government or academic sectors.
- Experience in dealing with senior executives and government officials in both the U.S. and Japan.
- Experience living and working in both Japan and the U.S., plus Japanese language skills, are highly desirable.
- Experience in non-profits or small business, or managing a discrete unit within a larger organization, with P&L responsibility.
- Experience in dealing with a large, active Board, or other situations in which working with multiple stakeholder constituencies was crucial.

Personal Qualities

- Commitment to the mission of deepening grassroots support for the US-Japan relationship and creating networks where people interested in Japan can share their passion.
- Smooth, empathetic interpersonal skills (good EQ).
- An appreciation of the importance of promoting diversity.

Location

The Society's offices are located at Werqwise at 140 New Montgomery, San Francisco. The Board will be looking to the new President to decide how to handle remote working options as we exit the pandemic.

Benefits include health-care and matching contributions in a 401(k) plan.

Application Instructions

To apply, please send a cover letter, CV, and a list of three professional references (with their names, titles, organizations, contact information) to jsnc2022search@gmail.com with the subject line: **Application for JSNC President**. To be considered, applicants must provide all requested documents by May 16, 2022.