

**Japanese Teachers Association of Texas  
2015 Annual Meeting  
in conjunction with the  
Texas Foreign Language Association Conference  
Rose Garden Room, Marriott Westchase Houston, Houston, Texas  
Friday, October 16, 2015, 8:00-9:30 AM**

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING**

**Members in Attendance (敬称略) :**

A total of 17 members.

Yoshiko Fujii Gaines (President), Yuko Kawabe (Vice President, Post Sec. School), Chizuko Bolinger (Vice President, Secondary School), Kacie Landrum (Treasurer), Yayoi Takeuchi, Junko Hatanaka, John Cadena, Fumie Howard, Sachiko Fukushige, Elizabeth Hojo, Masumi Reade, Yuko Prefume, Makiko Fukuda, Erina Romanowich, Hiroko Sato, Yoshimi Sheridan, Yuki Waugh (Secretary)

**Non-members in Attendance (敬称略) :**

A total of 4 non-members.

Atsushi Iwasaki (Consul-General), Yuki Ochiai (Vice Consul), Patsy Brown (Japan America Society of Houston Executive Director), Ferhat Kocer

**Recording of Minutes:**

Yuki Waugh, JTAT Secretary

**Opening:**

JTAT President Yoshiko Fujii Gaines opened the meeting at 8:15 a.m.

1. JTAT 2016 Nengajo Contest: Year of Monkey by Vice President Bolinger sensei
  - Bolinger sensei asked the members to refer to her email for the official rules and entry forms of the JTAT Nengajo contest. The deadline to be sent to JASDFW is Thursday, December 3<sup>rd</sup>. The categories include elementary school, middle school, high school, and university. Up to ten entries per school and one teacher form per school will be accepted.
2. Treasurer's report 2015 by Treasurer Landrum sensei
  - The balance is \$4855.41. The income was mainly from the Japan Foundation grant and AATJ membership funding. Takeuchi sensei asked her the number of current members. Hatanaka sensei responded that there are approx. 50 members. The balance is from previous year and the workshop funding was from the Japan Foundation grant. Web hosting was cheaper than previous years. Reade sensei suggested that JTAT officers discuss the possibility of supporting members' travel funding from El Paso so they could attend JTAT annual meetings and speech contests.

### 3. New JTAT Officer Nomination and Selection Process by the Nomination Committee Chair Hatanaka sensei

- Hatanaka sensei announced the JTAT officer nomination and the election. The Nominating Committee calls for nominations for a vice president from college, a vice-president from high school, a secretary, a board of director from college, and a board of director from high school position. Hatanaka sensei asked the members to email all of the nomination members which are Hatanaka sensei, Takeuchi sensei, and Bolinger sensei, and nominate the officers and the board of the directors by 5:00 p.m. on Friday, October 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2015. The Nomination Committee contacts those who are nominated for confirmation by October 30<sup>th</sup>, 2015. The Board of Directors will approve those candidates by November 6<sup>th</sup>, 2015. The JTAT members will vote on November 7<sup>th</sup> through November 13<sup>th</sup>. Hatanaka sensei has sent a list of current JTAT members, which was color-coded by regions. Members who were not applicable for nominations were in the black font. Hatanaka sensei asked the members to nominate the candidates from different regions of Texas so that the officers and Board of Directors can represent all the regions of Texas. Hatanaka sensei noted that the Board of Directors have approved that the new vice-president will be installed as president in one year.
- Bolinger sensei asked when a vice-president will be installed as president. Hatanaka sensei replied that this will be applicable from this nomination cycle. Fujii sensei explained that this vice-president nomination will be technically a future president nomination. Bolinger sensei proposed that anyone who will be willing to be a president should be able to self-nominate themselves or be nominated. Hatanaka sensei explained that the rule was approved by the Board of Directors. Fujii sensei explained the background that the JTAT has experienced difficulties to find members who would be willing to be president, and the last president Takeuchi sensei served as president for two terms. Takeuchi sensei explained that the previous rule that anyone who was willing to be a president could be a president, but it is difficult to be a president without an experience as an officer. Fujii sensei proposed that such a member should be a vice-president first and then be a president. Hatanaka sensei explained that there are many associations with the system that members become presidents after a few years of experience as officers. She encouraged the members to participate in the nomination actively and encouraged to have new officers.
- Takeuchi sensei recommended discussions among the officer and Board of Directors should be recorded because the new system of upgrading vice-presidents to be presidents is not written on by-laws. She suggested that the officers and the Board of Directors could discuss the possibility of nominating or self-nominating presidents who are willing to as proposed by Bolinger sensei. Fujii sensei encouraged the members to cooperate each other.

4. 2016 Texas State Japanese Speech Contest Handbook by Japan America Society of Houston Executive Director Ms. Brown and Sato sensei

- Ms. Brown explained that the Japanese Language Speech Contest Committee created a Texas State Japanese Speech Contest Handbook for the first time. The JTAT members have received a draft by email. The registration, instructions and timeline, the contest date, and contestants' eligibility guidelines, dress codes were specified on the handbook in summer.
- A new division is *haiku* to encourage creativity beyond memorization. The contestants must choose one of the haiku provided by JTAT and compose their own haiku that is inspired by the master haiku that the contestants selected. The contestants must submit their original haiku during the registration. They must recite the master haiku twice, present their English explanation, and recite their original haiku twice.
- Sato sensei explained the members that the current handbook is a draft and more specified eligibility will be added. The College/University contestants must be undergraduate students who are currently enrolled in the Japanese program. Graduate students must be in the Open Division. The eligibility of the Aurora contestants follows the Aurora contest rule. The contestants must not be students who do not have native Japanese parents or who have not attended *Hoshuko*, Japanese Saturday Schools. It will be noted that the haiku contestants may spend over two minutes to recite their haiku on the handbook.
- The contestants are asked not to identify their school when they introduce themselves. The contestants must not have more than one native Japanese parent. The haiku was added to encourage the contestants for creativity beyond memorization. Sato sensei asked the members to propose ideas for the contestants' creativity in the future.
- The contestants of the Intermediate Division choose one category among haiku, skit, or speech with text. The contestants can compete at the poetry category only once and cannot enter the category another year again.
- Bolinger sensei asked Sato sensei how to connect between the contestants' haiku and the master haiku. Sato sensei explained that the contestants will choose one haiku from four haiku that JTAT selected. After they recite the haiku twice, they would create their own inspired by the master one. For example, the contestants would choose a season and express what they were inspired by the form of haiku after they explain their inspiration and feelings on their haiku in English. Prefume sensei said that the contestants could give explanations in Japanese. Sato sensei responded that they could explain in Japanese, but it does not mean that the contestants who would give explanations in Japanese would receive higher scores than those who gave explanations in English.

- Bolinger sensei pointed out that there are many modern haiku with *jiamari*, excess syllables in haiku. Sato sensei responded that it will be noted that the contestants' scores will not be deducted because of *jiamari* if the poem is haiku.
- Hojo sensei asked for a clarification of the eligibility of half Japanese students. Sato sensei explained that students with Japanese parents who speak Japanese and has Japanese nationality are not eligible to enter the High School or College/University Division, but they are eligible to enter the Open Division. Students with one Japanese parent were eligible to compete and were required to declare when they registered. They can also enter the skit category.
- Fujii sensei asked the members to contact their speech contest advisory liaisons if they have further questions.

5. Collaboration: Japan Current Issues in Japanese Education in Texas and the Future Agenda – honored guests, Deputy Consul-General Atsushi Iwasaki and Vice Consul Yuki Ochiai

- Mr. Iwasaki introduced himself and said that this is his first year to be Deputy Consul-General at the Consulate-General of Japan in Houston. This was his first time to attend an annual JTAT meeting. Then Mr. Ochiai introduced himself and said that this is his second year as a Vice Consul at the Consulate-General of Japan in Houston. He is in charge of public relations and politics. High school students with teachers from two high schools in the Dallas area are currently visiting Japan through *Kakehashi* Project and have enjoyed their visit. While it is difficult to receive funding from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, he expects to continue the project. He hoped that the principals and the administrators from the school districts where Japanese classes are offered and strength Japanese education and related events. Mr. Ochiai asked the members to contact him and receive an application if interested. He asked the members to refer the program information from the Japan Foundation homepage.
- The members from each area reported their current issues and requests to the Consulate-General of Japan in Houston. Takeuchi sensei from Dallas said that having the Consulate-General of Japan in Houston as a governmental office in Texas is encouraging her students to learn Japanese.
- Hatanaka sensei from Austin said that the University of Texas had close of 500 Japanese language learners at most in the past, but the number has declined to approx. 370 students now. Many students major only in Japanese while many Japanese majors have double majors with another such as business and computer science. She said she would appreciate it if the consulate's office could share opportunities that her students could use Japanese in the future. UT has invited alumni that are working in Japan or having careers related to Japan.
- Fujii sensei introduced San Antonio as the area with strong collaboration. Romanowich sensei said that she hopes the teachers who have not joined the annual meetings to participate in the future. Fukuda sensei reported that the enrollment in the Japanese classes at the University of Texas at San Antonio is

increasing, but there is a Japanese instructor shortage. As a result, an instructor teaches six classes instead of four classes. The UTSA used to have an instructor from the Educational Exchange Program (EEP), current ALLEX. The department cannot search national to find an instructor to teach only one or two classes. It is hard to find instructors who are qualified to teach Japanese language with a M.A. degree in Japanese in San Antonio.

- Bolinger sensei from Houston said that she would like to have more Japanese cultural activities, but it is difficult to purchase materials with the budgets. She would appreciate it if the consulate's office could let the members borrow Japanese cultural materials such as *kendama* or send instructors such as calligraphy teachers several times a year. Fukushige sensei said that it would be great if the consulate's office could have Japanese events at a place such as the Asia Society so she take her students by school bus. Reade sensei reported that she and Hojo sensei have had the event that their students study Japanese culture through the quiz bowl since last year. They also have had Japanese cultural festivals. She said that their students would be happy and be encouraged if people from the consulate's office could visit those events.
- Howard sensei from Dallas reported that Fujitsu has had Japanese New Year events. She believes that it is a great way to inform the students and parents that there are Japanese companies in the area when Japanese companies host Japanese events. She asked the consulate's office to ask the Japanese companies to cooperate. That would be helpful for her students to hope that they may be able to work at Japanese companies in the future.
- In response to the requests by the members, Mr. Iwasaki said that they could show and teach Japanese culture. He would consider Japanese events with high schools. Mr. Ochiai explained that the consulate's office has some Japanese cultural materials such as *kendama*, but the number is limited because they are used to introduce Japanese culture. He is afraid that it is difficult to ask the Japanese companies to donate money for Japanese events. However, it is possible to have Japanese events sponsored by the consulate's office. It is difficult to rent the Asia Society space due to the high cost. Ms. Brown from the Japan America Society of Houston encouraged the members to reach out JASH for the support from Japanese companies.

#### 6. Announcement by President Fujii sensei.

- Fujii sensei announced about the TFLA Reception, the JTAT Network Dinner, and the TFLA Award Luncheon that Takeuchi sensei would receive the Japanese Teacher of the Year and Hojo sensei would receive the New Teacher of the Year. She asked the members to suggest 2016 JTAT Summer Workshop ideas.

The meeting adjourned at 9:30 a.m.

(Minutes taken by Secretary Yuki Waugh)