

Fifth JETAA International Conference

More than 40 JETAA leaders from the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom, Australia, Japan and Korea attended the Fifth International Conference of JETAA (the Japan Exchange and Teaching Alumni Association). The event was hosted by the JETAA Los Angeles Chapter, and held at the Sheraton Airport Hotel in Los Angeles from November 19th through the 21st, 1999. The Japan Local Government Center (JLGC) and the Consulate General of Japan in Los Angeles sponsored the three-day gathering which featured a full schedule of presentations, discussions, seminars and social events.

JETAA Southern California Co-chairs Keith Kato and Emily Kariya welcomed members on arrival, but the formal Opening Ceremony was the Friday evening Welcome Reception hosted by CLAIR, the Council of Local Authorities for International Relations. This official conference kickoff included remarks by Naohiro Ishida (Director, JLGC New York), Akio Egawa (Deputy Consul General of Japan — Los Angeles) and members of JETAA Southern California, including a toast by Ms. Kariya.

Saturday's General Session began with several presentations by attending representatives: "Why JETAAI Exists" (Anita Chandan/Montreal); "Bylaws Process and Overview of Country Representative Voting" (Daniel Lintz/Tokyo); Grant in Aid and history of CLAIR's support for chapters and JETAAI (Yvonne Thurman/New York); history of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' support for chapters

and JETAAI (Anita Chandan); and a look at JETAAI and its affect on individual chapters (Bill Higgins/Philadelphia). Two speakers then addressed members: Linda Kennedy (JETAA SC) speaking about "Jobs After JET: JETAA's Role"; and Michael McVey (JETAA Phoenix), who focused on "JETAA Internet Issues."

In the afternoon, participants separated for smaller "breakout" sessions on a variety of topics, led by various JETAA members as well as a Japanese Consulate representative.

Sessions included:

JETAA and the Community (Michelle Jones/Canberra): JETAA activities within Associations' local and regional communities;

Small Chapter Issues (Debbie Kirk/New Orleans and Tania Wilson/Canberra): funding, assistance to new and returning JETs, publications, working with other small chapters, growth, developing sub-chapters;

"JETAA 'Burnout'" (Rebecca Peach/Minnesota, Ronn Patton/San Francisco and Nancy Kikuchi/Southern California): the Minnesota Chapter, which has no officers and rotates responsibilities to prevent burnout, was

used as a model, and a brainstorming session allowed for further discussion;

JET Recruitment Issues (Yoshiko Kono/Japanese Consulate, Chicago and Kent Yocum/Southern California): participants broke into smaller groups to discuss recruiting new members for the JET Program.

Cultural Delights

After a long day of seminars and discussion, participants were whisked away by bus to the Japan America National Museum in downtown Los Angeles. Following a guided tour, a reception hosted by the Japanese Consulate was held in the Museum's beautiful atrium. Appetites satisfied, the participants were enthralled by a performance by The Asia America Symphony. A farewell party hosted by JETAA SC was held in the nearby Oiwake Club; those who still had energy moved on to Karaoke and caught the last bus back to the hotel at 1:00 AM.

Sunday's General Session highlighted JETAAI activities, including the Sony Corporation Video Project introducing Japan into the classroom, and the Photoshow of Japan that was started by Bill Higgins. The session ended with a discussion of the future of JETAAI. It was clear by the end of the meeting that the Fifth JETAA International Conference more than met the advance expectations of its participants. With their enthusiastic involvement it is clear the new millennium will certainly see the growth of JETAAI.



Participants in the 5th Annual JETAAI Conference found the meeting stimulating, satisfying and a positive indicator of future expansion.