

JSAC Statement of Intent

Thank you very much for this opportunity to state my case for selection as President of the Japan Studies Association of Canada (JSAC). I am extremely proud of my long association with JSAC. We have a strong core of members who are both experts in their own disciplines and on Japan itself. There is a shared love and appreciation for the country, its language and people and an interest in exploring the country's historical and contemporary challenges and strengths.

JSAC has been at the centre of my academic life from the beginning. I first attended a JSAC meeting in Edmonton in 1994. As an aspiring researcher, not yet enrolled in a PhD program, I approached the conference with great trepidation. I need not have worried. The JSAC community was warm and welcoming. They saw past my nervousness and, from the very beginning, provided encouragement and friendship in equal measure. I have greatly valued the personal relationships that I have developed with the JSAC member over the years and truly appreciate the manner in which the group welcomes young academics into the group. As a much more seasoned academic – has it really been 22 years? – I can honestly say that the JSAC community is the most collegial, supportive and engaging scholarly group I have ever encountered.

My Background

I moved to New Zealand in 1995 and started my PhD program in Political Science at the University of Waikato. My thesis, comparing the manner in which three neo-liberal governments (Australia, Canada and Australia) responded to changes in the Japanese trading environment, was completed in 1999. I started a faculty career that took me from Bishop's University to Kansai-Gaidai University in Japan, the University of New Brunswick at Saint John, and the University of Saskatchewan, where I held a two-year SSHRC post-doctoral fellowship and taught in the USask-Hitachi MBA program. I secured a tenure-track position in Political Science at the University of Waterloo before taking up my current position as Associate Professor of Political Studies at the University of Saskatchewan in 2012. I have taught Japanese business and Japanese/East Asian politics throughout my career. I integrate Japanese topics and issues extensively into my current courses in Political Studies and International Studies.

On the research side, I have maintained a strong interest in Japanese political economy. My initial work focused on Canada-Japan business relations, followed by a focus on scientific and technological innovation in Japan. My revised PhD dissertation was published as *Government, International Trade, and Laissez-Faire Capitalism; Canada, Australia and New Zealand's Relations with Japan* (2002). I have been funded by the Social Science and Humanities Research Council of Canada for several projects related to Japanese Innovation and digital media in the country. I have also published a series of books on Japanese innovation, the Internet revolution in Japan, digital media in East Asia, and global digital media policies. My most recent co-authored book was *The Global Digital Economy: A Comparative Political Analysis* (Cambria, 2015). I have just submitted a revised copy of my manuscript tentatively titled *Green Japan: Environmental Technologies, Innovation Policy and the Pursuit of Green Growth* to a Canadian academic press.

Through JSAC, I learned of and secured a Ministry of Foreign Affairs research grant that enabled me to expand my research on Japanese business. I also received a Japan Foundation fellowship that launched my research on Japan's investments in environmental technologies. I was the co-organizer of JSAC meetings at the University of Saskatchewan (2001), University of Waterloo (2008), and the University of

Saskatchewan (2013). I co-edited the proceedings of a JSAC conference, which were published by Routledge as *Japan in the Age of Globalization* (2011). Separately, I was co-applicant for a SSHRC workshop grant that allowed us to host a small workshop called “Japan in the New Economy,” which we held at the University of Saskatchewan in 2013.

JSAC Presidency

As JSAC president, I would endeavour to build on the work of Presidents David Edgington and Ken Coates to strengthen JSAC and expand the organization’s influence and impact. I would continue to promote JSAC’s role of supporting scholarship on Japan and promoting Canadian awareness of Japan. I envision five main areas of focus during my Presidency:

1. **Recruit additional members.** JSAC’s membership is small and many key members have retired or will retire soon. I would make a concerted effort to find other Canadian academics and researchers who work on Japan and encourage them to become involved with JSAC. I would focus, in particular, on young scholars, providing them with an entrée into the world of interdisciplinary Japan Studies.
2. **Build connections with Japan scholars in other parts of the world.** I have attended Asia and Japan related conferences and meetings in other parts of the world including the Association of Asian Studies, the European Association of Japanese Studies, the Europe Japan Advanced Research Network, the New Zealand Asian Studies Society and the Japan Studies Association (US). I would like to invite scholars from other parts of the world to our annual conference, including more of our colleagues working in Japan. We have done this in the past, including in particular, Professor Norio Ota’s fine work, but it would be nice to build stronger and more lasting links.
3. **Celebrate our membership.** Many of our JSAC members have been honoured by the Japanese and Canadian governments for their long standing work on Japan. It would be great to draw more attention to these accomplishments and to capitalize on this collective expertise to inform discussion on Japan in Canada. JSAC can demonstrate its value to Canada and to the Canada-Japan relationship by maintaining a more active presence in the media and in public discussions about Japan.
4. **Continue our efforts to connect with the Canadian government and the Canadian business community.** It is important for JSAC to continue to be well connected with the Canadian government, the Embassy of Canada in Japan and, if possible, the Canadian business community involved with Japan. JSAC routinely reaches out to local business people and government officials to participate in the annual conference. I think that the organization can be more proactive and can seek additional partnerships and collaborations that will encourage greater attention to Japan.
5. **Maintain our remarkable engagement with the Japan Foundation.** JSAC has been a major beneficiary of Japan Foundation financial support, professional guidance and network-building activities. The JSAC-Japan Foundation Lecture Series organized by David Edgington is an excellent example of the mutual benefit of our close partnership. It is vital that JSAC continue to cultivate this invaluable friendship and work with the Japan Foundation to promote Japan Studies in Canada.

The Japan Studies Association of Canada has been well served by its dedicated and hard-working membership. As our annual conference crosses the country, one cannot help but be impressed with the collegiality and professionalism of the JSAC team and their hard work and commitment to Japan Studies. Most Japan Studies specialists in Canada work in professional isolation, rarely having more than a handful of Japan researchers on their campuses. JSAC has long provided comfortable, encouraging and supportive space in Canada, allowing us to share our achievements, commiserate about our personal and professional challenges, and discuss our interest in Japan. I would be deeply honoured to serve as the President of this fine organization.

Yours truly,

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