

Xander Peterson

JETAA of Northern California (US-13)

- JET Program, Miyazaki, ALT, 2009 – 2012
- JETAANC Assistant Vice President, 2013 – 2014
- National Conference, JETAANC Representative, 2013
- JETAANC Membership Chair, 2014 – Present
- JET Program Coordinator, Consulate General of Japan in San Francisco, 2013 – Present

JET is both my professional and personal passion; I have dedicated myself to working hard for everything JET-related since I arrived back from Japan. I strongly believe that I have the necessary skills, connections, and leadership to help advance JETAA USA to the next level.

Background, Achievements & Skills

My story in JETAA is one of becoming progressively more involved in our great organization and taking on progressively larger areas of responsibility in the service of our alumni. After returning from the JET Program in 2012 I immediately became active in the JETAANC, where I began to help grow the South Bay Area scene. A few months later I became the JET Program Coordinator at the Consulate General of Japan in San Francisco. I also became Assistant Vice President of the JETAANC and was soon actively involved in San Francisco's Japan-related community.

As Assistant Vice President, I represented the JETAANC at San Francisco's numerous galas, fundraising events, and Japanese festivals, building our relationships with other Japan-related organizations in the Bay Area. I have been actively working on bringing together alumni and community members who are interested in playing Japanese traditional instruments in an effort to promote *hougaku*. I represented the JETAANC at the 2013 JETAA National Conference, where I learned about what other chapters wanted to see the most from JETAA USA. Many of the great ideas I heard from other chapters, like a *Nihongo Dake Dinner* or a *Yukata Bar Crawl*, I am now spearheading for JETAANC. The main issue that stuck with me throughout the conference was the strong call for a unified JETAA database -- a demand that I know I could help meet through my experience with membership database management.

My role as Assistant Vice President slowly evolved into the larger role of Membership Chair, where I became responsible for the recruitment and management of our membership, as well as managing our 3,000+ JETAANC database. The cloud-based Salesforce database platform we use is extremely powerful, and I have made a dedicated effort to learn how to use and maintain it for the benefit of the chapter. My experience with managing large-scale databases will help us reach the goal of a national unified database.

My professional position as JET Program Coordinator allows me to be a part of every aspect of JET, as I am in charge of providing support to the outbound JETs, staying in communication with the current JETs that I have sent, and supporting the returning JETs. This gives me a holistic perspective on the state of the JET Program, how the program is evolving, and where JETAA USA could be the most effective. In addition, I liaise between JETAA, MOFA, and CLAIR Tokyo for my professional duties. Their support is crucial to the growth and development of the JETAA USA, and I can leverage those relationships for the benefit of all chapters.

Goals & Expectations

As a Country Representative, I would like to work with my fellow CRs and the Board of Advisors to continue to expand upon all of the hard work of prior dedicated CRs. In addition, there are a few things I would like to focus on. My first goal would be to capitalize on the groundbreaking work being done on the JETAA USA National Capacity Building Initiative by continuing to develop and foster the professional profile of JETAA. It is essential for our growth to keep the ties with our current partners in America and Japan strong while simultaneously developing ties with new organizations. Improving communication to external organizations about who we are, what we have accomplished, and what we can accomplish would be one good way to go about this. Better data gathering and reporting on our events are two methods that I would like to pursue that will help us achieve this.

Along those lines, my second goal would be to develop a national membership database. A problem every chapter faces is finding an efficient way to manage our growing numbers. As Membership Chair for the largest U.S. JETAA chapter, I understand that problem very well. I have seen first-hand how proper handling of membership data can improve the participation rate and make a chapter's events more effective. I would like to pursue different ideas on membership management to find an efficient solution that will best solve the goals of JETAA USA and meet the needs of every chapter.

Finally, I would like to improve our communication with MOFA and CLAIR in order to expand JETAA's relationship with the JET Program. More open dialogues with CLAIR will show the JETAA how we can help recruit better JET candidates, prepare departing JETs better, and do a better job of ensuring that returning JETs become active JETAA members. I know from my position as JET Program Coordinator that CLAIR Tokyo really would like our help, and improved communication will benefit both parties greatly.

I am excited for this opportunity at working towards advancing JETAA on a national level. I believe that my experience and dedication will be of great use. Thank you for considering me for the position of JETAA USA Country Representative.