

The Prince Takamado Japan Centre for Teaching and Research

Annual Report July 1, 2023 – June 30, 2024

Affiliated Faculty:	Faculty of Arts
Interim Director (2023-2024):	Walter Davis, Associate Professor, Department of Art and Design
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1. Objectives

The Prince Takamado Japan Centre for Teaching and Research (PTJC) was established in commemoration of His Imperial Highness Prince Takamado in 2004 and is the managing body of the Prince Takamado Japan Canada Memorial Fund.

The centre's mandate is

- to provide opportunities for interdisciplinary study and research which promotes Japan Studies, including language, business, culture, politics, history, technology and science;
- to strengthen research which situates Japan in a global, transnational and/or comparative context; and
- to become the focus of a network of expertise in these areas in Canada.

In 2023-2024, the PTJC aimed to continue fulfilling this mandate and to

- formulate a new strategic plan,
- position itself to continue offering successful, established programs while developing transformational new ones,
- develop the centre's identity and profile, and
- expand the centre's network of partners and collaborators.

2. Highlights (Spring 2023 to Spring 2024)

Strategic Planning and Engagement with Stakeholders and Potential Partners

- Blueprint for renewal and growth of the PTJC and Memorial Fund
Working with Faculty of Arts and U of A leadership, the PTJC formulated a strategy to increase the centre's impact, elevate its identity, and attract new supporters. In support of the blueprint, the Faculty of Arts has allocated new funding for PTJC operations and

initiatives (\$65,000 per year for five years, 2024-2029) and committed to hiring a new academic faculty member to serve as Director of the centre.

- Engagement with stakeholders, university, community, and potential partners
Highlights include:
 - welcoming representatives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan and the Japan Foundation, Toronto (October 2-3; March 19; May 28-29)
 - hosting in-person meetings of the National Association of Japanese Canadians' Human Rights Committee (April 27-28)
 - seeking student input at the KGK Lunar New Year Festival (February 9)
 - welcoming four past, current, and future presidents of the Pharmaceutical Society of Japan at the Innovations in Drug Discovery and Development symposium organized by the Canadian Society for Pharmaceutical Sciences (June 12)
- PTJC 20th Anniversary Celebration
With support from university leadership, the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and the Japan Foundation, Toronto, the PTJC began arranging events on September 24 and 25, 2024 that will call attention to the centre's legacy of success, highlight new initiatives and momentum, and bring diverse partners, stakeholders, and communities together.

Student Learning, Research, and Mobility; Recognition of Student Excellence

- Japanese Language Proficiency Test (JLPT)
Commissioned by the Japan Foundation, the PTJC administered the exam to 356 Japanese language learners from across North America on July 2 and December 3.
- Princess Takamado Essay Contest
The centre recognized outstanding student research presented at Replaying Japan 2023 - The 11th International Japan Game Studies Conference, Nagoya Zokei University, Nagoya, Japan (August 18-20, 2023), with awards for
 - Homeira Baghbanmohiri, PhD student, Kobe University, "Analyzing the 'cultural identity' of the game: through the comparison between The Witcher and Final Fantasy game series,"
 - Nökkvi Jarl Bjarnason, PhD student, University of Iceland, "Japan and the Rise of National Game Studies,"
 and at the Canadian Association for Japanese Language Education Annual Conference (August 17-18, 2023), with an award for
 - Masako Shimada, PhD candidate, University of Calgary, "Effects of Japanese Prosody on Comprehensibility: A Comparison of Techniques for Training L2 Japanese Prosody."
- Kakehashi Project
Supported by the Consulate General of Japan in Calgary, the PTJC sent eight U of A students to Tokyo and Nagoya, February 17-25, to study social innovation and entrepreneurship via this Asia Pacific Foundation of Canada exchange program.
- 33rd Alberta District Japanese Speech Contest (March 2, 2024)
At this event co-hosted by the PTJC and the Consulate-General of Japan in Calgary, twenty-four students delivered speeches in Japanese. The contest was held online, which

enabled participation by students from the University of Regina, the University of Saskatchewan, the University of Calgary, and the U of A.

- 35th Canadian National Japanese Speech Contest (March 24, 2024)
At this event organized by the Embassy of Japan in Canada and the Canadian Association for Japanese Language Education, twenty-three winners of seven regional competitions across Canada delivered speeches in Japanese at the Embassy of Japan in Ottawa. The PTJC provided a trophy and medals for winners of the event, aided the contestants' travel arrangements, and offered the Grand Prize on behalf of the Memorial Fund. U of A student Megumi Varghese won the Grand Prize.
- Afternoon at the U of A Botanic Garden
On March 10, in collaboration with the Faculty of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Science, the PTJC took fifty Japanese students visiting from Josai International University to view medicinal plants, explore the Garden, and experience Canada's springtime snow with hot chocolate and fire pits.
- Film Screenings
The PTJC sponsored public screenings of Japanese films at Metro Cinema organized by Dr. William Carroll:
 - Satoshi Kon, *Paprika* (2006), October 25.
 - Akira Kurosawa, *Stray Dog* (1949), January 9.
- JACOS/JAPEX Scholarships in Engineering for 2023-2024
Awarded to Kylin Fraser, Marcus Lieu, Spencer van Roessel, and William Lulchak (University of Calgary); Kim Reizel Diaz, Ellen Fabros, and Christina Sibley (Keyano College); and Bradley Fink, Brooklyn Hemeyer, Xianghua Qiu, and Samantha Dabels (University of Alberta).
- Ritsumeikan Summer Japanese Program Travel Awards for summer 2024
Awarded to Cody Banh, Jacob Oleksiw, and Ya Wen Ma.

Research and Creative Activity

The PTJC held, co-organized, and supported events for dissemination of research and creative activity and for community engagement.

- *Hold These Truths* Screenings and Panel Discussions
The PTJC supported the Gordon Hirabayashi Anti-Racism Project's screenings of the play *Hold These Truths* followed by panel discussions with playwright Jeanne Sakata, actor Kevin Takahide Lee, and director Melanie Dreyer-Lude at
 - The John Humphrey Centre for Peace and Human Rights Ignite Change convention, in person at the U of A and live-streamed, December 3.
 - Calgary Nikkei Cultural & Senior Centre, December 5
 - Lethbridge Multicultural Centre, December 6
- Co-sponsored Lectures at the U of A
 - Dr. Nanako Nakajima, "Dance Dramaturgies of Aging in East Asian and Euro-American Contexts," December 1.
 - Dr. Grace En-Yi Ting, University of Hong Kong, "Translating Li Kotomi: Say Translation is Art and Love, and Queer," March 28.

- PTJC Online Seminar
With support from the Consulate General of Japan in Calgary, the PTJC hosted “The Impact and Roles of Japanese Community Centres in Canada” on March 25. Four scholars and community leaders (Dr. Aya Fujiwara, U of A Dept. of History, Classics, and Religion; Mr. Roger Teshima, Chair, Calgary Japanese Community Association Legacy Project and former President of the CJCA; Dr. Henry Tsang, Associate Professor, RAIC Centre for Architecture, Athabasca University; and Ms. Michelle Day Miles, Executive Director, Nikka Yuko Japanese Garden) gave presentations and took part in a roundtable discussion moderated by Dr. Walter Davis. The seminar was livestreamed and recorded for later, online viewing.
- Gordon Hirabayashi Annual Lecture in Sociology
In collaboration with the Committee Advocating for Racial Equality (CARE) and the U of A Department of Sociology, the PTJC began co-organizing this new lecture series. Its inaugural lecture will be delivered on October 3, 2024 by Dr. Pamela Sugiman, Dean of Arts at Toronto Metropolitan University. Donations raised by the series will support the Gordon Hirabayashi Graduate Scholarship Endowment.

The PTJC also initiated a new grant program and undertook research and creative projects of its own to engage new collaborators, increase awareness of the centre, and articulate its identity.

- PTJC Seed Grant Program
The centre initiated this signature program with design assistance and financial support from the Faculty of Arts (\$65,000) and the Office of the Vice President of Research and Innovation (\$115,000). It will enable five interdisciplinary teams of Canadian and Japanese researchers to seek national funding for ambitious projects. The selected projects and their U of A Principal Investigators are:
 - Sean Caulfield, Art and Design, “Visualizing Climates of Health”
 - Yelena Gluzman, Media and Technology Studies, “Centring autistic life-worlds in *tojisha kenkyu*.”
 - Kimberly Noels, Psychology, “The Structure of Language Learning: Goal Contents across Asian and Anglophone Contexts.”
 - Geoffrey Rockwell, Philosophy and Digital Humanities, “Hollywood Kyoto: Preserving the Historic Toei Studio Park.”
 - Kaitlyn Watson, Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences, “Navigating Generosity: Exploring the Impacts of Donated Medicines in Health Emergencies to Resource-Limited Countries (Gen-MED Study).”
- Gordon Hirabayashi Legacy Video Project
With \$10,000 from the Japanese Canadian Legacies Society, the centre hired and directed Guerilla Motion Pictures, Ltd. to record a 20-minute documentary video about Dr. Gordon Hirabayashi. It will be screened at the National Association of Japanese Canadians annual conference in October 2024 and at the Canadian Ethnic Studies Association’s biennial conference in November 2024 before being made available online.
- PTJC 20th Anniversary Online Exhibition of Japanese Calligraphy

With \$9,904 from the U of A President's Fund for the Creative and Performing Arts in Art & Design, the PTJC began preparing an online exhibition of Japanese calligraphy for unveiling at the PTJC 20th Anniversary Celebration.

Conference Organization and Support

- NAJC 2024 Annual Conference
The PTJC partnered with the National Association of Japanese Canadians to co-organize its 2024 annual conference. It will take place on October 4-6 and will bring NAJC delegates from across Canada to the U of A for sessions about human rights, Japanese and Japanese Canadian Culture, and NAJC capacity building. The PTJC successfully applied for \$2,000 from the NAJC Endowment to support student curation of a poster display at the conference.
- Replaying Japan 2024
The PTJC supported organization of this conference about Japanese game culture, which will take place in Buffalo and Rochester, New York on August 18-21, by helping adjudicate the selection of conference papers and sponsoring the Princess Takamado Essay Contest at the gathering.

3. Plans (Spring 2024 to Spring 2025)

The PTJC aims to

- continue offering current programs effectively,
- continue soliciting stakeholder and advisory boards' input and secure administrative approval of the centre's new strategic plan,
- begin implementing the strategic plan, such as by organizing an international conference for 2025-2026,
- assure smooth transition of leadership as a new Director is hired,
- successfully mount the PTJC 20th Anniversary Celebration,
- successfully co-host the NAJC 2024 Annual Conference,
- disseminate the Gordon Hirabayashi Legacy Video and PTJC 20th Anniversary Online Exhibition,
- continue developing the PTJC's connections and collaborations with diverse members of the U of A community and external partners and patrons,
- hire a PTJC program coordinator who can support new PTJC initiatives

People

Interim Director

- Dr. Walter Davis

Administrative Assistant

- Ms. Rei Kondo

Communications Coordinator

- Ms. Aya Kymson

Program Coordinator (graciously lent by the Kule Institute for Advanced Study to assist preparation of PTJC 20th Anniversary Celebration)

- Mr. Casey Germain

Administrative Board

- Dr. Marie Carriere, Vice Dean Research, Faculty of Arts
- Dr. Daniel Fried, Chair, Department of East Asian Studies
- Dr. Sandra Bucerius, Director Centre for Criminological Research, Department of Sociology

Advisory Council

- Dr. Robert Wood, Dean, Faculty of Arts, University of Alberta (Chair)
- Ms. Christine Nakamura, Director, Public Relations, Marketing and Policy Coordination, Asia-Pacific Foundation
- Mr. L. Philippe Rheault, Director, China Institute, University of Alberta
- Dr. David Welch, President of Japan Futures Initiative, Chair of Global Security at the Balsillie School of International Affairs and Professor, Department of Political Science at the University of Waterloo
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