

2020 BUSINESS PLAN

Introduction (Susan Meiki)

It is usual for the annual Business Plan to outline activities, initiatives, and general outlook for the coming fiscal year. But 2021 is most certainly not a usual year. As the COVID-19 pandemic continues to handicap Japan as well as other parts of the globe, JALT members are facing unprecedented challenges as the education landscape evolves at a rapid pace.

Many activities that our members and associate member partners typically engage in have been canceled or have changed to online platforms. Conferences are going virtual for the moment. JALT Chapters and SIGs are hosting online meetings and workshops and are allowing people all over Japan the chance to attend them. At the time of writing this report we are planning for a JALT2021 International Conference in Shizuoka, but of course we are constructing contingencies. Whether or not we manage to host our conference, there is no doubt that the financial benefit our organization has traditionally enjoyed from our conference will again be severely compromised in 2021.

As stated in the last business plan, This will be a year of adjustments, creativity and hybrid models. The post-pandemic “normal” will be filled with new challenges and JALT will need to respond as an organization to the needs and concerns of a membership and corporate/institutional community that have changed. In short, JALT needs to change the way it does its business. As the national officer responsible for managing the business side of the organization, I will work diligently to support the Board of Directors in their efforts to affect change where necessary.

The 2021 International Conference (Wayne Malcolm)

The current planning for the JALT2021 international conference is to have a hybrid conference. This would see JALT2021 split into two conferences, the face to face portion being November 12 to 15 in Shizuoka, and an online portion most likely after that. With Covid-19 causing a great amount of uncertainty with regards to the planning of events, the details of JALT2021 are still being discussed by the JALT Conference Planning Committee, and other relevant JALT parties. All this said, the vision of JALT2021 is to have a strong and robust online presence. This should be a primary focus with all conferences moving forward. Regardless of what happens with Covid-19 and future situations, strengthening connections made by being forced to go online is important. Connecting communities is fundamental to our mission, so we must continue to develop multiple platforms for the JALT International Conference.

Regional Professional Activities Committee (RPAC) (Nate Reed)

In line with JALT-wide adaptations RPAC will continue to explore ways to connect members, groups and regions virtually, and, likely, hybrid in time. Pan-SIG planning has been going very smoothly and the team is solid. Preparations for 2022 are also underway. Connecting to communities in localities is something we have been focusing on, and a project we will continue on.

Young Learners Subcommittee (Caroline Lloyd)

As Japan has started implementing a number of reforms in its Third Basic Plan for the Promotion of Education (2018-2022) there are many changes taking place in the Japanese education system. JALT needs to be at the forefront of these changes and offer support, information and advice to teachers from early childhood education up to secondary school. In 2021, the YLS plans to hold training programmes as well as pursue the possibility of having an online video training programme for teachers in early childhood education. For more information please contact Caroline Lloyd @yals@jalt.org

Associate Members (AMs) (Susan Meiki / Miho Tajima): With the decline of ad revenues and the number of JALT Associate Members (AMs), Susan and Miho have been working on a revised list of benefits for the AM categories and introduced a new AM category for non-education related

companies. In addition, avenues of revenue are being planned to allow social media advertising and special discounts for advertising for the AMs. The November conference can no longer be relied upon as a source of funds and a more broad advertising strategy will be presented at the AM meeting mid-late May. Hopefully with an aggressive campaign, we can get to the number of AM levels from 2 years ago. In addition, thanks to Richmond and Malcolm, a new and revised Media kit was developed and will be debuted at the AM May meeting.

JALT Central Office (JCO) (Robert Chartrand / JCO)

JALT Central Office (JCO) Staffing: We anticipate that the staff at JCO will continue working from home and going to the office in Tokyo as necessary, until the pandemic conditions subside.

Website and Database Development: As the website and database have become more integrated into the workflow of JCO and JALT business, we do not anticipate any major updates this coming fiscal year. Minor bug fixes and requests to make changes will continue throughout as part of the normal workflow, and we can now look to improve more cosmetic changes such as the logo or other aspects that have been previously discussed. Also, as the database becomes more reliable, we can start thinking about ending our contract with Splash, the database consulting company that has been used to maintain the JALT database, but will no longer be needed.

Basecamp Integration: In order to improve communications within the JALT organization, it will be a good idea to continue using Basecamp as our main communication tool and make use of other Google Workspace applications to complement the current communications systems for JALT business.

Membership (Melodie Cook)

I think membership has been increasing somewhat due to the ZPD initiative, and have written to Chie for the latest numbers, but am still waiting for a response.

Public Relations (Bill Pellowe)

In 2021, PR will continue its subscription to Hootsuite, which allows JALT to schedule social media posts, which has helped in the lead up to our conference as well as our big deadlines such as the call for presenters. Second, our subscription to Canva will continue to help create professional-looking graphics for social media. Third, judicious use of “boosted” posts on Facebook and Instagram (paying small amounts to ensure that our message reaches a wider audience) will continue to help us expand.

Also, JALT’s new website contains many features that had been on our wishlist for years, and I want to help chapters, SIGs and committees learn how to best use the website in their own publicity efforts. Obviously, we have an events calendar, and chapters and SIGs have been using event listings on [JALT.org](https://www.jalt.org) in various incarnations for years. But now, with some imagination, committees and publications could also use the calendar to mark due dates for applications or calls for papers. Committees now have a voice on our website like never before, with the ability to not only update their own descriptions, but also put out news stories, add reports, and also create entire pages on the website relevant to their committee. Committee chairs should watch this video for an overview and “how to”: <https://youtu.be/DCtgDEWnUjo>.

Finally, PR will work with the JALT Business Manager to monetize JALT Talk, the JALT monthly announcements newsletter. Our new newsletter platform allows us to place images and to count clicks, so we’ll experiment with advertising.

Treasury (Michael Mielke)

The 2021-2022 Fiscal Year budget saw a two thirds reduction in the grants to the chapters and SIGs. However, the chapters and SIGs have a significant amount of savings to draw upon for the coming year. There are also considerable funds available through the Development Fund if needed. At the time of writing this report it has been decided that there will be an International Conference, but whether the conference will be online or a hybrid has not been decided yet due to the uncertainty caused by the new variants of COVID-19. There is a strong possibility of new revenue streams introduced by the Business Manager to attract new AMs and bring back old AMs. The completion of the new website and database means we do not have to pay for the maintenance fees of the old system. We also anticipate that JALT BoD meetings and EBMs will be hybrid or completely online for the foreseeable future in the next fiscal year which will also result in reduced expenses. Finally, I would like to encourage chapters and SIGs to not shy away from collecting fees from non-JALT members at chapter and SIG events by making use of on-line payment systems such as PayPal and Shinsei Bank money transfers. This will not only help keep the chapters and SIGs more financially sound, but also provide a clear value for JALT members. All in all the financial future of NPO JALT looks stable. We will remain vigilant in monitoring both revenues and expenses for the coming year to assure the fiscal health of JALT beyond the continuing pandemic crisis.

Conclusion

This was an overview of what these key business areas of JALT have planned for this fiscal year, April 2021 through March 2022. If you have any questions about specific areas, mentioned or unmentioned, please contact the Board of Directors at <directors@jalt.org>.

Susan Meiki
JALT Business Manager
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