Foundation of UNIGE and UZH Alumni Network in Japan

Why Swiss university alumni networks in Japan?
The University of Geneva (UNIGE) and the University of Zurich (UZH) are the two largest universities in Switzerland currently cooperating with 13 respectively 12 Japanese universities in education and research. UNIGE and UZH are also the only universities in Switzerland that offer the comprehensive study of the Japanese language, culture and society. Setting up alumni organizations therefore complements the already strong cooperation of UNIGE and UZH with Japanese universities and expands the network of both universities on the personal level to Japan. The alumni associations will:

• serve as a networking platform, connecting the participants to a powerful network around the globe
• be a first point of contact for visiting professors, researchers and students during their stay in Japan
• promote the visibility and reputation of both universities in Japan

Goal

Promote Switzerland as a hub for education and research: Many Japanese are still uninformed of the excellent study environment, high level of Swiss Universities and the cost effectiveness of studying in Switzerland. The aim is to increase the recognition of the advantages of studying in Switzerland where not only the academic level but also the quality of life is outstandingly high.

• Search and identify UNIGE and UZH alumni living in Japan: Since UNIGE and UZH already maintain strong cooperation with Japanese universities it was expected that a considerable number of alumni could be found in Japan. While UNIGE focused on those alumni with a degree from that university, UZH also wanted to include friends of UZH (guest professors, guest researchers, former exchange students).

• Identification of chairpersons: The sustainability of an alumni association largely depends on the motivation of a chairperson or a group of chairpersons to organize activities and meetings for the group. The search was done during the preparatory meeting.

• Organize the foundation meeting: During the foundation meeting, the alumni/friends had the possibility to get to know each other and establish new connections. The meeting was an occasion to hear about the ideas and wishes of the alumni/friends in connection with the establishment of alumni associations.

Results

• Total 166 alumni and friends in Japan: 112 UZH alumni/friends and 54 UNIGE alumni living in Japan could be identified and contacted. Initially, the search for the alumni was mainly conducted through social networks like LinkedIn and Facebook as well as scientific journal databases for example Thomson Reuter's ISI Web of Knowledge and CiNii. After the preparatory meeting, word of mouth helped to spread the word and more alumni were found.

• UZH alumni and friends preparatory meeting: on December 12, 2011, 25 UZH alumni and friends met at the Embassy of Switzerland for a first informal preparatory meeting. Two UZH alumni (Mrs. Rahel Kaegi Romero, Dr. Frank Staubli) and two UZH friends (Prof. Hiroko Satoh, former exchange student Mr. Yuta Daigi) offered to take the lead in organizing the group.

• Basis for future activities laid: on January 24, 2012 “UNIGE Alumni Japon” and “UZH Alumni and Friends Japan” were invited to the Swiss Residence to lay the foundation for their alumni associations in Japan. Ambassador Bucher’s hospitality and the support through the Science & Technology Office Tokyo greatly helped to give the event the appropriate setting and atmosphere. Approximately 68 participants attended the networking event: 34 from UZH, 25 from UNIGE, as well as representatives from Japanese universities and the
alumni organizations of ETH Zurich, UNIL and HSG. This will enhance future collaboration between Swiss universities’ alumni associations in Japan. **Pascal Praplan** (UNIGE Alumni Director and official UNIGE representative) explained the idea of setting up an alumni organization in Japan. **Christian Schwarzenegger** (Professor for Criminal Law at UZH with long standing research experience in Japan and official UZH representative) especially came to Japan to attend the event. In his speech he stressed the importance of increased cooperation between Japanese and Swiss universities.

- **Feedback** of the participants was very positive. Many of them met old friends they haven’t seen in years. Since UNIGE and UZH are large universities with many different subject areas the professional backgrounds of the participants was very diverse and many new connections could be established between people that otherwise wouldn’t have met in their daily life.


- **Press reply**: 1 article in UZH News ([http://tinyurl.com/UZH-News](http://tinyurl.com/UZH-News)), 1 article in UZH Journal, 1 article on SCCIJ ([http://tinyurl.com/SCCIJ-120213](http://tinyurl.com/SCCIJ-120213))

- **Inauguration event video** online: [http://tinyurl.com/UZH-UNIGE-Japan-2012](http://tinyurl.com/UZH-UNIGE-Japan-2012)

- **Informal get-together**: on 19 March, 7 UZH alumni and friends met for an informal get-together (Stammtisch). Similar events are planned for the future and will be announced on social media (Facebook, Linkedin) and the following homepage: [http://www.alumni.uzh.ch/organisationen/tokyo.html](http://www.alumni.uzh.ch/organisationen/tokyo.html)

- **Hanami Party**: on 31 March, 18 UNIGE and UZH alumni met for a Cherry Blossom party at Ootaru bar in Nakameguro (Tokyo).

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**Testimonials**

- **Mrs. Rahel Kaegi Romero DKSH (UZH alumna, co-chair UZH Alumni and Friends Japan)**
  “The event was a great occasion to reconnect with old university friends. There were several people whom I had not seen since my university days, which had the predictable effect of “Oh my God, it’s been so long!”. As one of the four people who have undertaken to build up "UZH Alumni and Friends Japan" it was also a good opportunity to ask my fellow alumni what they expect and in what way they hope to benefit from such an organization. Being able to make the acquaintance of people involved in other alumni organizations, e.g. from the ETH Zurich or the University of Geneva, will, I hope, pave the way for future cooperation as well. All in all, the event was the perfect occasion to get the alumni movement rolling!”

- **Mrs. Hisayo Ônishi (UNIGE alumna)**
  “Thank you very much for everything you did to realize such a great reception for all of us. It really helped all the alumni and friends in Japan of the two Swiss universities. I am sure all the related people are looking forward to the next occasion.”

- **Ambassador Dr. Takako Ueta, Professor, International Christian University (UNIGE alumna)**
  “Thanks to this event, I could meet my old friends and meet participants whom I could not see during my daily life. I hope this human contact promotes and strengthens relations between Japan and Switzerland.”

- **Dr. Christian Schwarzenegger, Professor for Criminal Law, UZH (official representative)**
  “The event was successful we succeeded in attracting a lot of attention. We had a lot more people here than we expected. And it was also an interesting mix because Switzerland is a combination of different cultures. We had the alumni from Geneva and the alumni from Zurich and that gave a lot of input to the people who attended this meeting.”

Host / Organizers

- Swiss Ambassador Urs Bucher
- Science & Technology Office Tokyo
- UZH’s International Relations Office
- Alumni UNIGE

64 Swiss-Japanese University Agreements
Appendix

Press Release

Swiss Universities Expand Their Alumni Networks to Japan

Japanese and Swiss universities are amongst the most highly ranked research and educational institutions in the world. Due to the international nature of the student bodies and faculties at Swiss universities, their alumni networks also extend to most major countries.

On January 24, the University of Geneva and the University of Zurich will launch their Alumni chapters in Tokyo (“UNIGE Alumni Japon” and “UZH Alumni and Friends Japan”, respectively) during a joint inaugural event at the Embassy of Switzerland in Tokyo. Both alumni groups include Japanese members, as well as those of other nations, and represent a wide range of professional backgrounds, reflecting the great diversity in research and education at the two largest Swiss universities.

The University of Geneva, founded in 1559, and the University of Zurich, founded in 1833, offer a comprehensive range of subject areas, covering the natural sciences, medicine, the social sciences and the humanities. They are also the only universities in Switzerland that offer programs on the study of the Japanese language and culture. Both universities have a record of excellence in research and education and have hosted several Nobel laureates either as students, researchers or professors; among them Wilhelm Roentgen, Albert Einstein and Kofi Annan. Furthermore, both universities maintain various academic relations with esteemed Japanese partner universities. The Alumni Chapters are expected to further strengthen the cooperation between Japan and Switzerland by acting as platforms for networking.

For further information, please contact:

Science & Technology Office Tokyo
Embassy of Switzerland

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Les Universités de Genève et Zurich étendent leur réseau au Japon

Tokyo, le 25 janvier 2012. Cette semaine a eu lieu, à Tokyo, une première réunion très courue des diplômé(e)s des deux Universités suisses, dont de nombreuses personnalités helvétiques et japonaises.

Tant l’Université de Genève que celle de Zurich proposent un cursus complet d’études japonaises, que ce soit de langue, de culture ou encore de société, a rappelé ce mardi Urs Bucher, ambassadeur de Suisse à Tokyo, lors de la soirée de lancement des chapitres locaux des associations d’alumni des deux Institutions. Et l’événement a prouvé une fois de plus combien les liens entre l’Archipel et nos universités sont nombreux et étroits : une bonne soixantaine de diplômé(e)s avaient fait le déplacement, certains depuis des centaines de kilomètres à la ronde, pour cette première réunion à laquelle a aussi œuvré le Secrétariat d’Etat à l’éducation et à la recherche.

Les participants, japonais et européens, offraient une belle image de la qualité de nos diplômes et de la diversité des carrières qu’ils permettent. Il y avait, parmi ces ancien(ne)s de Genève et de Zurich, bon nombre de professeurs des plus prestigieuses universités japonaises, mais aussi des avocats, des chefs d’entreprises, des responsables d’organisations internationales, des architectes… tous ravis de se rencontrer, d’échanger leur carte de visite et de prévoir de prochaines rencontres.


For further information, please contact:
UNIGE: Pascal Praplan, directeur, Alumni UNIGE, pascal.praplan@unige.ch
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General: Dr. Felix Moesner, Head, Science & Technology Office Tokyo, felix.moesner@eda.admin.ch

Science & Technology Office Tokyo
Embassy of Switzerland
Meeting Minutes Preparatory Meeting
UZH Alumni and Friends Japan: Preparatory Meeting at the Swiss Embassy, December 12, 2011

Summary
UZH (University of Zurich) Alumni and Friends gathered at the Swiss Embassy in Japan for an informal meeting to prepare the official launch of the group, which has been proposed by the International Relations Office of UZH. After a welcome speech by Dr. Felix Moesner, Head Science & Technology Office Tokyo, Samuel Krebs from University of Zurich presented the UZH Alumni and Friends Japan project. During the reception, Rahel Kaegi Romero, Hiroko Sato, Frank Staubli, and Yuta Daigi offered to take over the lead of the UZH Alumni and Friends in Japan.

Meeting Minutes
On December 12, 2011, University of Zurich’s alumni and friends met at the Embassy of Switzerland in Japan for an unofficial gathering in preparation of the official alumni group in Japan. The event, organized in collaboration between the Science & Technology Office Tokyo of the Embassy of Switzerland and UZH’s International Relations Office, was joined by 26 alumni and friends. Dr. Felix Moesner, Science & Technology Counsellor of the Swiss Embassy made a welcome speech and informed the members of the meeting’s agenda: to select the first chairpersons of the UZH Alumni and Friends Japan Group. Samuel Krebs, UZH coordinator of the alumni project in Japan, presented the University of Zurich and the recent developments in the alumni initiatives of this university. He focused on the history of UZH and its strong cooperation with top universities in Japan. Furthermore, Samuel Krebs presented the possible activities and functions of a UZH alumni and friends group in Japan and announced the date of the official inauguration cocktail reception which will be held on January 24, 2012 at the Swiss Residency in Tokyo.

After the presentation, the alumni and friends had the opportunity to get to know each other over a glass of wine and snacks. Dr. Felix Moesner suggested Rahel Kaegi Romero (Communications Manager at DKSH, UZH Alumni Japanese Studies), Hiroko Sato (Professor at the National Institute of Informatics, Tokyo, research guest at UZH), Frank Staubli (Business Development Manager Head Asia Business Genedata, UZH Alumni Phd Biochemistry) and Yuta Daigi (Master Student Doshisha University Kyoto, former exchange student at UZH) to take over the lead of the group and they agreed.
Presentation Preparatory Meeting

UZH Alumni and Friends Japan: Meeting at the Embassy of Switzerland, December 12, 2011

UZH 12 Nobel Prize Laureates...

- Wilhelm C. Röntgen (1901)
- Albert Einstein (1921)

University of Zurich’s Alumni in Switzerland
- 21 Alumni Associations with 15’000 Members.
- Alumni UZH, the Umbrella Organization for University of Zurich Alumni Associations was founded in 2006 to bundle all alumni activities.
- Web page: www.alumni.uzh.ch
- Closed member platform: http://www.alumni.uzh.ch/platform.html

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International UZH Alumni Groups:
- Munich
- Paris
- London
- San Francisco
- Singapore
- Shanghai
- Tokyo

Strong Cooperation between Swiss and Japanese Universities:
- 61 Agreements

Agreements between UZH and Japanese Top Universities:
- Azabu University
- Doshisha University, Kyoto
- Hosei University
- Kansai University
- Keio University
- Kyoto University of Foreign Studies
- Meijo University
- Osaka University
- Osaka University
- The University of Tokyo
- Tokyo Institute of Technology
- Tokyo University of Foreign Studies
- Waseda University

Existing Swiss University Alumni Group in Japan
- ETH Zurich Alumni Chapter
- University of St. Gallen Alumni
- A³-EFPL Chapter in Tokyo
- University of Lausanne and Japan Network
- IHEID Tokyo Chapter *)
The UZH Alumni and Friends Group in Japan...

- Expands your network
- Keeps you updated on activities of UZH
- Helps UZH expanding its reputation

Possible Activities and Functions of a UZH Alumni and Friends Group in Japan

- First point of contact for UZH Alumni and Friends in Japan

Possible Activities and Functions of a UZH Alumni and Friends Group in Japan

- Organize meetings with UZH researchers, professors and other interesting people

Chairperson...

Chairperson...

Expanding the network!

Expanding the network!

Official Inauguration of the UZH Alumni and Friends Japan Group:
January 24, 2012 at the Swiss Residency

Thank you for your Attention!