

REGIONAL SUMMIT OF U.S.-JAPAN RELATED ORGANIZATIONS: NEW ORLEANS

“Fostering Future U.S.-Japan Talent”

Wednesday, July 29, 2026

8th Floor, Sheraton New Orleans Hotel

500 Canal Street

New Orleans, LA 70130

AGENDA

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| 9:30 – 10:00 a.m. | Registration and Networking |
| 10:00 – 10:05 a.m. | Welcome and Opening Remarks
❖ Ms. Paige Cottingham-Streater, <i>Secretary-General, U.S. CULCON; Executive Director, Japan-U.S. Friendship Commission</i> |
| 10:05-10:10 a.m. | Participant Introductions |
| 10:10 – 11:20 a.m. | Community Conversation |
| 10:10-10:20 a.m. | Good Practices: Fostering Meaningful Louisiana-Japan Connections from Varied Disciplines and Industries
❖ Mr. Harrison Crabtree, <i>Executive Director, World Trade Center New Orleans</i>
❖ Dr. Samantha Perez, <i>Associate Professor of History, Department of History and Political Science, Southeastern Louisiana University</i> |
| 10:20-11:20 a.m. | Strategic Discussion: Facilitating U.S.-Japan Workforce Development
❖ Ms. Paige Cottingham-Streater, moderator |
| 11:20-11:25 a.m. | Closing Remarks
❖ Mr. Shinji Watanabe, <i>Consul-General of Japan in Nashville, Consulate General of Japan in Nashville (Arkansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, and Tennessee)</i> |
| 11:25 – 12:15 p.m. | Lunch and Networking |

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Bureau of Education and Cultural Affairs (ECA)*

SPEAKER BIOGRAPHIES



MS. PAIGE COTTINGHAM-STREATER is the Secretary-General of U.S. CULCON and the Executive Director of the Japan-U.S. Friendship Commission (JUSFC), an independent federal agency with the mission to strengthen the U.S.-Japan relationship through educational, cultural, and intellectual exchange. Prior to this, Ms. Cottingham-Streater launched and managed the Mike Mansfield Fellowship Program at the Maureen and Mike Mansfield Foundation. She also provided strategic leadership to the Foundation as Deputy Executive Director. Earlier in her career, she established the U.S.-Japan Project at the Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies; and served as staff attorney at the U.S. Department of the Treasury, Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms; and participated in the Japan Exchange and Teaching (JET) Programme. Ms. Cottingham-Streater is a widely respected leader in U.S.-Japan relations, and in 2004 received Japan's Foreign Minister's Commendation in recognition of her work. In 2022, the Government of Japan conferred on her the Order of the Rising Sun,

Gold Rays with Neck Ribbon. Ms. Cottingham-Streater holds a J.D. from George Washington University and a B.A. in Government and Asian Studies from Connecticut College.



MR. HARRISON CRABTREE is the Executive Director of the World Trade Center New Orleans, where he spearheads initiatives to elevate Louisiana's global standing through strategic business development, advocacy, and membership growth. Under his leadership, the organization has taken a proactive role in driving foreign direct investment while strengthening the state's position in global import and export markets. His tenure has been marked by significant milestones, including securing millions of dollars in federal appropriations for river navigation, launching a high-impact partnership with Louisiana Economic Development, and establishing the organization as a premier partner for foreign delegations. In recognition of his contributions to the regional business community, Mr. Crabtree was named a "New and Notable" professional by Biz New Orleans magazine in

2023 and has been featured on the New Orleans CityBusiness "Power List: Young Professionals." He holds a B.A. in public policy leadership from the University of Mississippi and an M.A. in international development from the University of Kent's Brussels School of International Studies.



DR. SAMANTHA PEREZ is Associate Professor of History at Southeastern Louisiana University. Her research examines diplomatic engagement and cultural communication in the early modern period, focusing on identity construction and performance in Italian encounters with England, Spain, and Japan in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Recent publications include "Japanese Migration to Louisiana and the Localization of War, 1900-1945" (Louisiana History, 2025), and the 2026 edited volume, Cross-Cultural Encounters in Early Modern Japan: Foreigners within the Samurai Class, c. 1550-1900 (Routledge), co-edited with Dr. Matthew Paul Smith. and available in Fall 2026. She has served on the board of the Japan Society of New Orleans for over ten years and, in 2019, chaired the New Orleans-Matsue Exchange program to celebrate the 25-year anniversary of the sister-city

relationship and recognize the deeply rooted cultural and historical connections between New Orleans and Japan. Dr. Perez earned her Ph.D. from Tulane University.



MR. SHINJI WATANABE is the Consul-General of Japan in Nashville, TN. This is his second assignment in the United States after having served at the Consulate-General of Japan in Denver, CO, where he was stationed from 2001 to 2005. The Consulate-General in Nashville serves the states of Arkansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, and Tennessee. Mr. Watanabe is interested in sustaining the people-to-people exchange in the area, which has created a solid foundation for economic exchange between Japan and the U.S., and opportunities for the younger generation to experience different cultures, nurturing the next generation of exchange leaders, and inspiring the creation of networks that transcend national borders. Outside of the U.S., Mr. Watanabe has served three times at the Embassy of Japan in Sweden.