

Dear Shuto Con Attendees,

Before our badge prices increase to the \$50 tier on Saturday, I wanted to write this letter to you all to talk about our price increase for this year since it has become quite the topic of debate. Though, regretfully, we have had to increase badge prices by \$5, and we have not had a price increase for two years previous, rumors and false information have been spreading. I wanted to address your concerns here and set the record straight.

I have always been nothing but upfront and honest with attendees for all the years I have been running Shuto. Sometimes my honesty has put me in a bad place in some of your hearts, but I have been honest regardless. I was really hoping I wouldn't have to talk about what I am about to, but since I always want to be honest with you all, I feel it's time to open up.

Shuto Con 2017 took a huge hit financially. We had an exponential rise in costs for our 2017 con that we were honestly a bit blindsided by and we did not have the attendance numbers to help cover the overall additional unplanned costs of the con. While we were able to pay all our con staff/crew/workers/guests in a timely manner as promised, it left us ultimately short on paying off the final financial costs of the convention (rental, union labor, etc). In order to cover this cost so we can have our 2018 event, I had to take out several tens of thousands of dollars in personal/business loans to cover the large amount of debt we had left over.

However, after making monthly payments over the summer things are now mostly paid off from the 2017 convention (only a few thousand dollars are left to pay off), and I am currently working on planning and budgeting for the 2018 convention.

Over the last two years (2016 and 2017) we have not raised our prices, as we know how important affordable badge prices are to our attendees. This year I had no choice but to raise the badge pricing by \$5. However, as promised in previous years, I have offered and will continue to offer attendees several opportunities to purchase badges at a reduced cost.

We have worked hard to keep our overall costs to attendees low such as negotiating hotel expenses and working with the city to offer affordable food options in and around the convention center. We also do something that not many other cons in the US are able to do, and that is pay people (be it staff or crew/volunteers) for their time worked at the convention. We feel this is only fair since their time worked at our event is precious. However, unfortunately, those expenses plus rising venue costs make it so we now need to raise our badge pricing to cover everything securely.

Thanks to our valued attendees and staff, Shuto Con 2018 WILL go on as planned. I have crunched the numbers and have solid plans to talk over with my staff to help reduce our convention expenses this year. There is a silver lining.

However, the future of the con after March 2018 is unclear. I have seen an unsettling trend in reduced attendance at conventions all across the US over the last year, and it makes me worried for our future. We rely so heavily on the support of our attendees and fans. Every year we basically start over financially, using whatever profits we may have made (if any) to roll over to the next year. I have considered doing

some sort of online fundraiser to help alleviate the financial strain from all the loans so we can start fresh without this burden looming over the con, but I am unsure if it will do more harm to our event than good.

I really hope that this letter helped alleviate worries and shed light on rumors. We hope you all will continue to support our convention, as supporting a small to mid sized con is one of the best things you can do for the community around it.

My staff and I have worked so hard on making Shuto Con what it is today! I wake up every day and look at the Sumi-jaki logo tattooed on my chest to remind me of my promise to bring our attendees the best show I can. Running Shuto Con is my life. I do it because I love it, not because I want to make this a convention all about myself. It allows me to contribute to my beloved nerd community and it gives me something to look forward to on a yearly basis. I am proud of what we've accomplished so far! I want nothing more in this world than to keep running Shuto!

We hope you will show your support for our event when we need it the most... We can't do it without "U".

Stefanie Shall  
Conchair of Shuto Con

P.S. If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to email me at [conchair@shutocon.com](mailto:conchair@shutocon.com). I am an open book and I am here to address your inquiries.