

An Asian American Leadership Conversation

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Dear Friends and Colleagues,

Higher Education is seeing something of a surge in Asian American appointments to campus leadership. Asian American (AA) Chancellors, Presidents, Provosts, and Senior Administrators have recently been named to campus positions. Some are very new and begin this summer 2022, some have longer terms and a very few of us are retired. The purpose of this note is our interest to explore the creation of a network of Asian American campus Executives where mutual support, friendship and enduring success can occur. This is a non-partisan effort. While there are many Asian American national groups with broad/focused memberships, we are hard-pressed to identify a single group exclusively focused on campus AA Chancellors and Presidents. We are a small group of campus, industry and government Asian American executives seeking to establish a network of campus leaders of Asian American heritage.

Asian American leaders have often risen to the top without mentors, support systems nor national venues to discuss how to sustain their leadership position. It has been too common to see the high expectations of AA leaders but the short fuse when minor and major challenges arise. That is, the slightest misstep, mishap, or misjudgment leads to termination. Similar indiscretions by others are rarely noticed, let alone lead to the end of administrative careers.

This note is going to a list of campus leaders recently appointed, or long standing (and/or retired) that we could identify by scouring higher education media, national organizations and “word of mouth”. We are excited by the new number of appointees and we are honored by the presence of experienced executives and those retired. There aren’t many of us. But we feel compelled to explore how this new wave will endure over time and how to support those of you early in your chief executive careers. We have heard the call across the country for “mentor” and “support” for Asian American Chancellors and Presidents. This is our call to action.

Here is our proposal:

We are proposing an initial zoom meeting to explore the creation of an Executive network of leaders of Asian descent. We want to gather your opinion and input about an organization for senior executives. We are exploring the support and sponsorship of a national organization as a home for any activities proposed. We want to help and we want to preserve and expand the pipeline.

If you are interested in this effort, all you need to do is send a “yes” or “no” (even “maybe”) to any of the individuals below. Please share a thought too. And if you know of anyone else not on the list let us know. A list is appended here.

Our congratulations to the recently appointed campus leaders. Kudos to the veterans on the list. Let us know what you’re thinking. Our best to each of you.

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