

Message from the Board Room

Tommy Hwang, Chairman

I'm pleased to welcome you to our inaugural issue of *The Executive Agenda* quarterly e-newsletter.

In 1993, a group of AAPI senior executives founded AAGEN with the sole purpose of helping other Asian American and Pacific Islander employees reach the senior executive levels of leadership within the federal government. Today, our membership has more than 300 members and continues to grow at an increasing pace!

Through *The Executive Agenda*, we hope to inform our current members of the many events AAGEN is involved in, provide insightful perspectives and thought-provoking ideas on issues important to AAPIs in government, and

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encourage eligible AAPIs to join and support AAGEN in their workplace and communities.

This issue also features a story on the genesis of AAGEN. From modest beginnings come great things.

Enjoy reading this eNews and prepare to be engaged.

AAGEN Launches the SES Development Program

Tin Cao, SES Program Coordinator

The first SES Development Program kicked off in style on March 21, 2012. The top 20 senior managers (GS-15 or equivalent) were selected to participate in a year-long developmental experience.

For AAGEN, this day was a culmination of effort 18 years in the making.

In response to President Obama's Executive Orders 13515 and 13583, establishing a coordinated government-wide initiative to promote diversity and inclusion in the federal workforce, AAGEN has launched the SES Development Program to prepare selected candidates for the highest levels in federal service.

The program is supported by the White House Initiative on Asian American and Pacific Islanders (WHIAAPI), Office of Personnel Management (OPM), and the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC).

"This is an important step, not only for the aspiring Senior Executives but also for the future of the SES, as we continue to build a culture that values and cultivates talent from all backgrounds," said OPM Director John Berry.

(See *SES Program*, page 2)

AAGEN Leadership Conference and Banquet

John Unyong Moon, Conference Program Coordinator

Experience a variety of valuable learning opportunities with senior executives who will share their insights and expertise on how to manage your professional career and prepare you for a fulfilling future in public service.

Thinking of starting or boosting your government career? Do you know how to be promoted? Do you think you can benefit from networking with current leaders? How about professional growth? Do you aspire to be a leader?

AAGEN wants you to be a leader. Our mission is to promote, expand, and inspire future and current leaders. AAGEN wants you to reach the highest levels of government service.

Speakers, coaches, sponsor and other attendees will inspire and motivate you to attain your personal and professional goals. Let us help you to achieve. You can start by attending our conference.

"Leadership in an Austere Environment"

Thursday, June 7

Doubletree Hotel

Crystal City, Virginia

Conference: 8 a.m. – 5 p.m.

Banquet: 7 p.m. – 9 p.m.

For more information, visit

<http://www.aagen.org/2012LeadershipConference>



SES Program (continued from page 1)

The Honorable Chris Lu, White House Cabinet Secretary and Co-Chair of WHIAAPI, gave opening remarks and the Honorable John Berry, OPM Director, delivered the keynote address. Distinguished guests included the Honorable Stuart Ishimaru, EEOC Commissioner; Susan Tsui Grundmann, Chair, Merit Systems Protection Board; Representative Judy Chu, Member of Congress; Clarence Johnson, Director, Diversity Management and Equal Employment Opportunity (DOD); and Vice Admiral Melvin Williams, Associate Deputy Secretary for Energy (DOE).

AAGEN congratulates the 20 candidates selected to participate in this pilot program. "I wish you great success in the program and in your career. I ask that you get involved and support AAGEN's mission of promoting,

expanding and supporting Asian American and Pacific Islander leadership in government, so that you can pass on your success to others," AAGEN Chairman Tommy Hwang stated.

The SES Development Program was planned and will be managed year-round by the SES Development Team – Tin Cao, Giao Phan, Huong Pham and Thomas Phan. The candidates were also paired with SES mentors who will guide the candidates throughout the year. "Your hard work and dedication to advance AAPI leaders in government is truly palpable," said SES candidate Marla Hendriksson (HHS).

For more information, visit:

<http://www.aagen.org/SESDevelopmentProg>



SES candidates and some attendees at the kick-off event for the AAGEN SES Development Program, March 21, 2012. **First row:** Vice Admiral Melvin Williams – Department of Energy (DOE); Clarissa Balmaseda – Internal Revenue Service (IRS); Marla Hendriksson (HHS); Sharon Wong (OPM); Tommy Hwang – AAGEN Chair; Stacey Pham (OMB); Dr. Regina Tan (USDA); Laureen Laglagaron (DOJ); Carolyn Truong (EPA); Rena Kim (DOJ). **Second and third row combined:** Thomas Phan – AAGEN Executive Director; John Moon (DOE); Dr. Ming Zhu – (DOE); Patrick Eng (DOD); Betty Chung (USAID); Katherine Lee (DOC); Mark Kasman (EPA); Louise Kitamura (EPA); Clarence Johnson, Principal Director, DMEE, OUSD; Anita Bible (SSA); Christopher Hale (DOJ); The Hon. Ruby Moy – AAGEN Board of Director - President and CEO of the Asian American & Pacific Islander Association of Colleges and Universities (APIACU); Dr. Sumiye Okubo – AAGEN Director; Dr. Ming Lei (HHS); Ms. Sasha Koo-Oshima (EPA); and The Hon. Sam Mok – Member of the AAGEN Advisory Board.

Reflections: The Genesis of AAGEN

Marla Hendriksson, with contributions from Tina Sung, Bel Leong-Hong, Carson Eoyang and John Hwang

Exactly 18 years ago, some fateful luncheons at a local restaurant led to the creation of AAGEN. The Executive Agenda follows the trail blazed by the early AAPI senior executives to learn more.

In 1993, a number of AAPI SESers saw the need for a support network and wondered just how many individuals of Asian or Pacific Islander descent were represented in the federal government's top ranks. Linda Lee's Hunan Restaurant in Washington, DC's Chinatown was ground zero for a series of monthly luncheons in which they discussed forming a network.

In May 1994, the group established its Articles of Incorporation, formalizing the Asian American Government Executives Network. The first slate of officers were: Carson Eoyang (NASA) as Chairman, Tina Sung (Federal Quality Institute) as Vice Chairwoman, Normal Bowles (FAA) as Secretary, Bing Bradshaw (OMB) as Treasurer, John Hwang (FEMA) for Membership and Outreach, Ellen Law (DOD) for Charter, Belkis Leong-Hong (DISA) for Directory, Sumiye Okubo (DOC) for Programs, and Tony Yen (DOT) for Special Projects. Together, they did the heavy lifting to launch AAGEN.

AAGEN's membership directory is a veritable Who's Who in the federal government...

Belkis Leong-Hong

Many seeds were planted even prior to AAGEN's formation, and the network received support from prominent AAPIs in government, such as then-Rep. Norman Mineta and Rep. Robert Underwood, and Maria Haley at the White House Presidential Personnel Office.

From the very beginning, members of AAGEN saw the value of this network and went on to make waves in their careers. For example, Tina Sung was one of the early

recruits to join then-Vice President Al Gore's National Performance Review (NPR), where she then recruited others. Experiences such as NPR led to career advances like earning a Presidential Rank Award for Meritorious Executive, one of the highest honors bestowed to career senior executives.

In keeping with tradition, AAGEN's members give back, helping each other and the next generation of leaders. Mentoring, networking, event sponsorship, program collaboration, leadership training, and outreach are staples of AAGEN membership. AAGEN's directory is a veritable Who's Who in the federal government. In almost two decades of hardwork and perseverance, AAGEN has held eight leadership conferences, sponsored countless outreach events, mentored hundreds of AAPI federal employees, and even collaborated in a variety of local community events. It is truly a labor of love.

Fast-forward to the first AAGEN eNews, *The Executive Agenda* – in which we feature another important milestone—the first SES Development Program (see page 1). Growing the next crop of leaders, with OPM support, is a dream come true. We've come a long way since 1993 and we're more robust than ever.

DID YOU KNOW?

3%

That's the number of Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders (AAPIs) currently in career SES positions.

(Source: <http://www.fedscope.opm.gov/>)

AAGEN's mission is to promote, expand and support AAPI leadership in government.

CONTACT US!

The Executive Agenda is AAGEN's quarterly e-newsletter. Article contributions are welcome! Need help publicizing your AAPI event? Do you have a topic of interest or other news to share?

Contact AAGEN Communications at news@aagen.org

If you are interested in joining AAGEN, please visit: <http://www.aagen.org/ApplyforMembership>