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New Report Finds Asians Remain Largely Absent From Foundation Boards

71 percent of the top 100 foundations lack Asian and Pacific Islander representation in their boardrooms

Los Angeles, December 19, 2012 – Leadership Education for Asian Pacifics, Inc. (LEAP) released today the results of its seventh report in the Leadership Research Series and the second edition focusing on Asian and Pacific Islander (API) inclusion on the Top 100 foundation boards. The statistics shed light on the stark reality of the scarce number of API leaders in the foundation world.

According to LEAP's report, in 2012, APIs increased their share of board seats by six from 2010. However, API inclusion has fallen behind in proportion to the total number of board seats going from 4.95 percent in 2010 to 4.0 percent in 2012. The decline is due to an increase in the total number of board seats at these foundations.

"There has been little progress in the top 100 foundation boardrooms. Therefore, our attention must focus on the need for all foundations to increase Asian and Pacific Islander representation on their boards," said Linda Akutagawa, LEAP's President and CEO. "Furthermore, there are zero APIs leading any of these foundations in the role of executive director, president and/or CEO, an issue we must challenge."

Key Findings

- In 2012, there were 42 API directors holding 44 out of 1,086 board seats at 29 of the top 100 foundations
- Of the 42 directors, 17 (40.5 percent) are women, an increase from 12 (33.3 percent) in 2010
- The ethnic breakdown of the 42 API directors is as follows: Chinese (14), Japanese (11), Asian Indian (8), Korean (4), Filipino (2) Laotian (1), Singaporean (1) and Vietnamese (1)
- Of the top 100 foundations, 59 are located in 9 out of the 10 states with the largest API population concentrations in the United States: California, New York, Texas, Illinois, New Jersey, Washington, Florida, Virginia and Massachusetts. Hawaii does not have any foundations in the top 100
- Nine of the Top 100 Foundations have two or more API directors on their boards (an increase from seven in 2010): The Ford Foundation, The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, The California Endowment, Silicon Valley Community Foundation, The Cleveland Foundation, The James Irvine Foundation, The California Community Foundation, The San Francisco Foundation and The Commonwealth Fund

"Being effective in creating positive change in today's world requires cultivating fresh perspectives and you don't get that by perpetuating an 'all of the same' leadership model," added Ms. Akutagawa. "LEAP strongly encourages foundations to step up and ensure that talented individuals—regardless of gender, race and ethnicity—have opportunities to sit at the decision-making table and contribute."

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To see the full report or to learn more about LEAP, please visit www.leap.org. For media requests, please contact Rima K. Matsumoto by email at rmatsumoto@leap.org or by phone at (202) 412-4190.

About LEAP:

Leadership Education for Asian Pacifics, Inc. (LEAP) is a national organization founded in 1982 with a mission to achieve full participation and equality for Asian and Pacific Islanders (API) through leadership, empowerment and policy. With original programs in leadership training, public policy research and community education, LEAP partners with individuals and organizations to help develop a robust pipeline of API leaders across all sectors.

Under its leadership research initiative, LEAP is producing a series of research reports to evaluate and measure API representation at the highest leadership levels in corporations, foundations and nonprofits. The intent of this baseline research is to provide a tool for advocacy on behalf of the community that businesses, public institutions, as well as political, community and educational leaders can use to develop and implement strategies for sustainable growth in this arena as well as to highlight the critical need for further work in the area.

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