

“The State of Asian Pacific America: Transforming Race Relations” is the fourth major public policy research report produced by our two institutions – Leadership Education for Asian Pacifics (LEAP) and the UCLA Asian American Studies Center. We hope this policy study, like others we have already released and those we will publish in the future, will serve to inform public discussions and shape public policy deliberations about the most important and compelling policy issue-areas facing the nation’s rapidly growing and diverse Asian Pacific American population.

At the beginning of a new century, it is obvious that race relations remains as one of America’s most significant, ongoing national dilemmas. Race continues to influence, in both subtle and overt ways, our access to and mobility within public institutions and private enterprises; what we see and do not see on television or movie theater screens; and what we talk about, debate, and act upon in our great legislative halls, on radio talk shows, and in ballot booths. Although the dynamics and scope of racial inequities, racial prejudice, and racial intolerance and violence changed in quite significant ways during the course of the past century, they continue to stain the American fabric.

Asian Pacific Americans have a major stake in the future of race relations in American society. No longer a small, regionally-based population, the over 11 million Asian Pacific Americans now reside in all fifty states, with large and highly visible communities from New York to Los Angeles, from Houston to Chicago, and from Honolulu to Boston. By 2020, they are projected to reach 20 million, and represent 1 in 20 Americans. Along with their rapid population growth, especially during the closing decades of the 20th century, has been their ever-increasing presence and significance in virtually all aspects of American race relations from public policy discussions over affirmative action to the alleviation of inter-group conflicts in multiracial urban centers.

This policy report is intended to respond to the continuing significance of race in American society by providing the most comprehensive, multidisciplinary empirical analysis of the diverse ways in which Asian Pacific Americans are redefining and indeed transforming contemporary American race relations. By doing so, we are interested in infusing the policy decision-making process with fresh and accurate information, as well as rigorous analysis and creative policy perspectives and recommendations. A team of renowned social scientists, historians, and public advocates from institutions across the nation, along with a scholar from England and another from Australia, was assembled to undertake this path-breaking endeavor with state-of-the-art quantitative and qualitative research techniques, and oftentimes original data. We are hopeful that the report will provide an abundance of meaningful, insightful and hopefully provocative views on how we should respond to the continuing and new challenges of our racial situation.

Like our other joint policy research activities and publications, this report reflects the special strengths and goals of our two institutions. The UCLA Asian American Studies Center, established in 1969, is one of four ethnic studies centers at UCLA, and the largest and most comprehensive program of its kind in the nation. Through its research, teaching, publishing, video productions, library and archival acquisitions, and community-university collaborations in fields ranging from literature to urban planning, the faculty, staff, and students of the Center have sought to advance scholarly and policy understanding of Asian Pacific Americans.

Leadership Education for Asian Pacifics, Inc. (LEAP) is a national, nonprofit, nonpartisan, community-based organization based in Los Angeles, California. Founded in 1982, LEAP's mission is to achieve full participation and equality for Asian Pacific Americans through leadership, empowerment and policy. With a wealth of information on Asian Pacific Americans and a national reputation as a leading Asian Pacific American organization, LEAP continues to raise the visibility and leadership effectiveness of Asian Pacific Americans.

We would like to pay special tribute to Professor Paul Ong of the Department of Urban Planning and the Asian American Studies Center at UCLA for serving as the principal investigator of this major policy report, as well

as the research director of the joint public policy research activities involving LEAP and the UCLA Asian American Studies Center. Professor Ong is the nation's foremost scholar addressing the most significant public policy issues facing the Asian Pacific American population, and we are tremendously grateful for the leadership, commitment, and vision which he has provided for this and other research endeavors.

We also would like to thank the extraordinary team of researchers who participated in this project, as well as the individuals who worked on producing this publication. Finally, we would like to express our gratitude to the Board of Directors of LEAP and the Faculty Advisory Committee of the UCLA Asian American Studies Center for their continued support of our joint policy research activities.

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Acknowledgements

We wish to thank the following individuals and institutions who have provided their generous support to the Asian Pacific American Public Policy Institute and have made this study possible:

The Charles Stewart Mott Foundation provided major funding for this research study. The Levi Strauss Foundation, Fannie Mae Foundation, ARCO Foundation, and Farmers Group, Inc. also contributed significant funds for the project. We wish to thank The Carnegie Corporation of New York, The Ford Foundation, State Farm Companies Foundation, Procter & Gamble Fund, and the GTE Foundation for their continued support of LEAP and the Asian Pacific American Public Policy Institute, and for making this project possible. We also wish to thank American Express and IBM, whose partnership and support of LEAP have contributed to our organization's success.

Many people contributed to the successful completion of this project. We are grateful to the UCLA Lewis Center for Regional Policy Studies for providing space and office support for the project, and to Don Nakanishi and the UCLA Asian American Studies Center for their constant support. We would also like to thank the members of the Center's Faculty Advisory Committee who, along with LEAP Board members and staff, served on the joint executive steering committee: Professors James Lubben, Jerry Kang, Geraldine Padilla, Pauline Agbayani, and David Takeuchi. The editorial assistance of Glenn Omatsu was invaluable for his expertise and professional insight, and Christine Wang provided exemplary guidance on financial matters. Levin Sy was indispensable in offering his technical assistance and project coordination skills. Kylee Williams and Thuong Mong Ha assisted in preparing the manuscript. We are also grateful to Jennifer Woo for the layout and cover design. Finally, each of the authors were supported by research assistants who are acknowledged in their respective chapters.

Finally, the individuals at LEAP deserve special recognition for their dedication to the project at every stage of its development. We wish to thank J.D. Hokoyama and John Y. Tateishi for their continued support of the project. We also wish to thank Melissa Reyes and Melissa Szeto, Program Coordinators, for their technical assistance and administrative support throughout the project. And, finally, we are indebted to Gena Lew, Director of Development, for her skillful management in working with the writers and the project team, and for her perseverance in seeing the final product through to its completion.