

2026 Empower Summit

Plenary Program

8:30 a.m. – 8:45 a.m. Welcome Remarks: Thriving in Challenging Times

Honorary Co-Chairs:

Donna Cole, President and CEO of Cole Chemical

Donna Davis, Assistant Dean of Empowerment and Leadership, South Texas College of Law

8:45 a.m. – 2:30 p.m. Coach's Corner Morning and Afternoon Session

Professional coaches from the **International Coach Federation (ICF-Houston)** will offer complimentary career coaching sessions. Sign up at the **Registration Desk** to take advantage of this exciting opportunity!

8:45 a.m. – 9:45 a.m. Workforce Development: Opportunities in Challenging Times

Panelists:

Donna Cole, Donna Fujimoto Cole, President and CEO of Cole Chemical

Michelle Mower, Director of Shadow Cave Pictures LLC

Matthew Cushing, Executive Director of Rice University

Jacquie Young-Hall, (*Inquired but to be confirmed*)

Insights into workforce development and economic mobility with new strategies, initiatives and educational activities as companies are downsizing their employee base and students are graduating from high school and college without jobs. Learn about existing and new fields of work that will drive economic mobility. Learn about opportunities in entrepreneurship to working in trending fields.

9:45 a.m. – 10:45 a.m. Civility in the Workplace

Panelists:

Donna Davis, Assistant Dean of Empowerment and Leadership, South Texas College of Law

June Liu, MPH Founder and Principal, JQL Consulting LLC

Renu Sachdeva, PCC, PHR, MBA, Global Head of Coaching at Talking Talent

Civility in the workplace feels increasingly fragile as political polarization and public flashpoints heighten emotions and make everyday interactions feel charged—sometimes through nothing more than an offhand comment or an awkward silence.

This session examines how emotional influence shows up in routine workplace moments, how personal drivers shape reactions we may not fully recognize, and how greater self-awareness and self-regulation contribute to a more generative work environment. You will gain practical tools for responding thoughtfully in the moment, reducing unnecessary tension, and cultivating mutual support, respect, and professionalism across differences.

10:45 a.m. – 10:55 a.m. Networking Break

Morning Breakout Sessions

10:55 p.m. – 11:55 p.m.

Harnessing Social Media with Purpose: Insights from Digital Strategist

Speaker: **Vivienne Kwon**, President, ykcreative

Strategist brings a sharp, practical perspective on how social media can strengthen community connection, elevate organizational identity, and empower diverse voices. With deep experience in digital engagement and content strategy, she will share actionable approaches for using social platforms intentionally and responsibly. Attendees will gain concise, real-world guidance on building authentic online presence, navigating rapid-fire digital trends, and communicating in ways that support inclusion and trust across teams and communities.

10:55 p.m. – 11:55 p.m.

Rest Is Not a Reward: Rethinking Work in Challenging Times

Speaker: **Jasmine Shah**, M.A., MBSI Director, Psychospiritual Coach, the Jung Center's MBSI Board of Director of Psychotherapy & Spirituality Institute, Core Coach of Columbia University Coaching Club

In today's culture, rest is often treated as something we earn—but true thriving begins when rest is recognized as essential. Drawing from her work at The Jung Center's Mind-Body-Spirit Institute, Jasmine Shah, M.A., guides participants through an exploration of rest rooted in psychospiritual practice. This session blends psychology, contemplative tools, and embodied awareness to help individuals reconnect with purpose, regulate stress, and lead from a grounded center. Through reflective exercises and practical strategies, attendees will explore ways to integrate restorative practices into daily life, cultivating clarity, presence, and a more sustainable, life-giving approach to work and well-being.

12:00 p.m. – 1:30 p.m. Luncheon and Keynote Speech

Keynote Speech: Houston's Asian Study

Speaker: **Daniel Potter**, Director, Houston Population Research Center at the Kinder Institute for Urban Research at Rice University.

Moderator: **Katharine Yang Bao**, Research scientist and co-author of the study Kinder Institute for Urban Research at Rice University.

The Houston region is one of, if not the most diverse in the entire country. Its diversity has been spurred by decades of growth, driven by both domestic and international migration. What are the factors that bring people to the Houston area? What contributes to people's quality of life in the region? And how does life in Houston look for one of the area's fastest growing groups -- Asian Americans? Using data collected from the Greater Houston Community Panel and the Asian American Community Study, these questions and others will be answered in order to help better understand the experiences, successes, and challenges confronting the region and its people.

Afternoon Breakout Sessions

1:35 p.m. – 2:35 p.m.

AI as a Catalyst for Visibility, Voice, and Impact

Speakers: Nelson Vanegas, Chief Strategist, Goodspero

Jessica Bolaños, Director, Digital and Impact | Education & Emerging Tech, Goodspero

In a world where uncertainty is constant, AI offers powerful new ways for individuals and organizations to thrive. Jessica Bolaños and Nelson Vanegas of Goodspero will share how AI-driven tools can expand visibility, strengthen storytelling, and amplify impact, especially for communities navigating challenging times. Drawing from their work in strategic multimedia and impact-focused communications, they will demonstrate practical, accessible ways to use AI to elevate your message, streamline creative work, and empower diverse voices. Attendees will leave with clear, actionable insights on leveraging AI with intention, authenticity, and confidence.

1:35 p.m. – 2:35 p.m.

Social Media and Cyber Security: employee/employer legal implications for unintended consequences. Keeping you out of court, the news and jail.

Speaker: Eartha Jean Johnson

Employee/Employer Legal Implications for Unintended Consequences

What you don't know can hurt your reputation and what people think of you when posting anything, but know that some posts can negatively affect your relationships with your suppliers, customers, employer, boss, co-workers, family and friends, while others may get you in trouble with the law!

2:35 p.m. – 3:00 p.m. Networking with attendees

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Collaborating Organizations

International Coach Federation – Houston

Asian Social

Greater Houston LGBT Chamber of Commerce

Interfaith Ministries for Greater Houston

Empower Summit

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Donna Davis, Senior Director for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion of
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