

The Association of Chinese American Professionals

EMPOWER 2026 SUMMIT



April 24, 2026
Sugar Land Marriott



*Thriving In
Challenging
Times*

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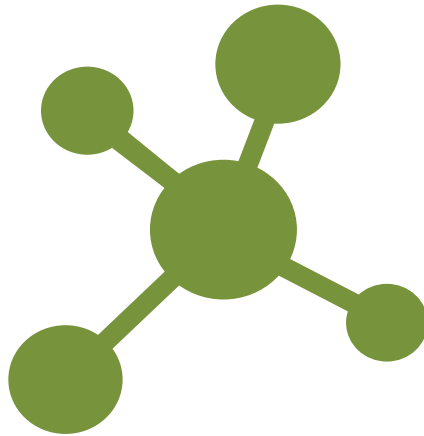
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Welcome to

The 26th Annual Empower Summit

Thriving in Challenging Times



Friday, April 24, 2026

Houston Marriott Sugar Land
16090 City Walk, Sugar Land, Texas 77479

Empower Summit Program

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OUR *Differences* MAKE THE DIFFERENCE



DIVERSITY
+
INCLUSION

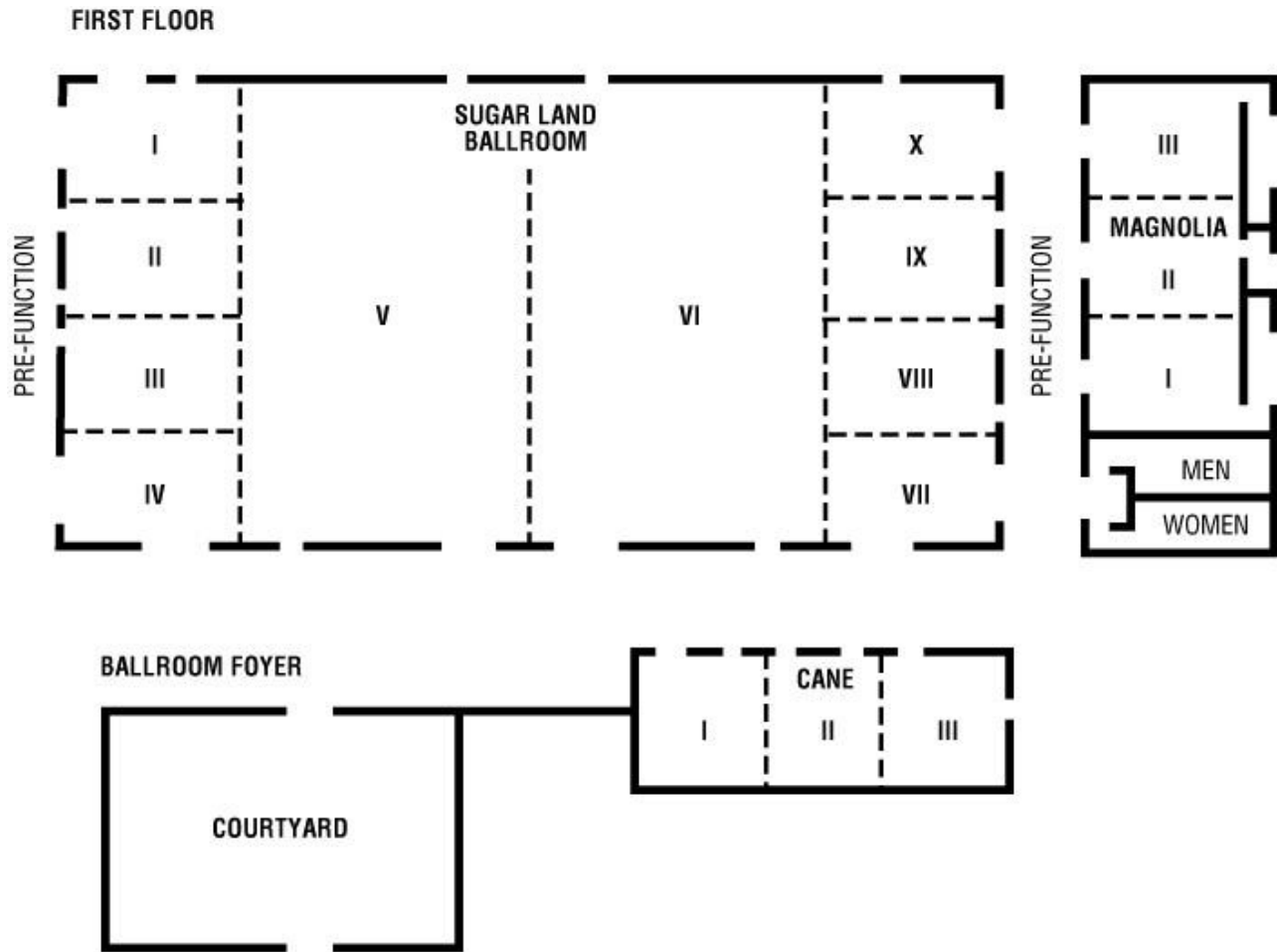
As a born-and-bred Texas company, H-E-B is committed to fostering a culture of diversity & inclusion in Texas, both in our workplaces and the communities we serve. Celebrating the differences and similarities of all Texans is integral to everything H-E-B does, every day, from employee recruitment to supplier registration, store locations to in-store product selection.

Conference Program-at-a-Glance

Time	Event	Room
7:30 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.	Conference Registration	Sugar Land Foyer V
8:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.	Corporate Exhibits	Sugar Land Foyer V
8:45 a.m. – 2:35 p.m.	Coach’s Corner	Sugar Land IV
8:30 a.m. – 8:45 a.m.	<p>Welcome Remarks: Thriving in Challenging Times</p> <p>Co-Chair Remarks: Donna Fujimoto Cole, President and CEO of Cole Chemical Donna Davis, JD, Assistant Dean of Leadership and Empowerment & Title IX Coordinator, Agosto Justice Center, South Texas College of Law Houston</p>	Sugar Land V
8:30 a.m. – 10:00 a.m.	Ice Breaking Exercise/Survey Whoova Application	Whoova App
8:45 a.m. – 9:45 a.m.	<p style="text-align: center;">Plenary Session I: “Workforce Development: Opportunities in Challenging Times”</p> <p>Donna Fujimoto Cole, President and CEO of Cole Chemical Michelle Mower, Director of Shadow Cave Pictures LLC Matthew Cushing, Executive Director, Rice STEM Engagement Center Jacquie Young, Manager, Maritime Workforce Development of Port of Houston</p>	Sugar Land V
9:45 a.m. – 10:45 a.m.	<p style="text-align: center;">Plenary Session II: “Civility in the Workplace”</p> <p>Donna Davis, JD, Assistant Dean of Leadership and Empowerment & Title IX Coordinator, Agosto Justice Center, South Texas College of Law Houston June Liu, MPH, Principal at JQL Consulting LLC Renu Sachdeva, PCC, PHR, MBA, Global Head of Coaching at Talking Talent</p>	Sugar Land V
10:45 a.m. – 10:55 a.m.	Networking Break	Ballroom Foyer
Concurrent Session I: 11:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.		
A	<p>“Harnessing Social Media with Purpose: Insights from Digital Strategist” Vivienne Kwon, President, ykcreative</p>	Cane I - III
B	<p>“Rest Is Not a Reward: Rethinking Work in Challenging Times” 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</p>	Sugar Land V
12:00 p.m. – 1:30 p.m.	<p>Emcee: Vani Rao, Executive Coach, VTK Consulting LLC Luncheon and Keynote Speech: “Houston’s Asian Study” Daniel Potter, Director, Houston Population Research Center at the Kinder Institute for Urban Research at Rice University.</p>	Sugar Land VI
Concurrent Session II: 1:35 a.m. – 2:35 p.m.		
A	<p>“AI as a Catalyst for Visibility, Voice, and Impact” Nelson Vanegas, Chief Strategist, Goodspero Jessica Bolaños, Director, Goodspero</p>	Cane I - III
B	<p>“Social Media and Cyber Security: employee/employer legal implications for unintended consequences. Keeping you out of court, the news and jail.” Eartha Jean Johnson, Chief Developer of CRIME NO CRIME, LegalWATCH</p>	Magnolia I - II
Networking/Whoova Survey/Gifts Winners: 2:35 p.m. –3:00 p.m. Ballroom Foyer		

Empower Summit
Houston Marriott Sugar Land

Conference Center Floor Plan



All conference activities are located on the first floor.

A Welcome Message from the Empower Summit Co-Chair



On behalf of the Empower Summit, I am honored to welcome you to Sugar Land for the 2026 Empower Summit, “*Thriving in Challenging Times*”.

Today, we gathered dynamic speakers to provide an opportunity for you to listen and learn about the challenges and opportunities we live in. You will be able to connect with other people to build new relationships to lead with purpose.

As we reflect on past years, we know that our speakers are inspiring and relevant to help you build a more inclusive, sustainable and secure world.

We are grateful to our sponsors for their generous support as these partnerships make today possible.

Thank you for joining us.

With warm regards,

Donna F. Cole
Empower Summit Event Committee Co-Chair
President and CEO
Cole Chemical & Distributing Inc.

A Welcome Message from the Empower Summit Co-Chair



Welcome!

Thank you to the Empower Summit Planning Committee and ACAP for the opportunity to serve as a 2026 Honorary Co-Chair, a collaborative position I share with Donna Cole. Feel free to call us the “Two Donnas!” We are delighted that you decided to join us for a day of education, networking, professional development, and reflection.

This year’s theme, “Thriving in Challenging Times,” will serve as the foundation for our engagement. The sessions are designed to provide attendees with practical tools and techniques that can be applied directly to your organizations.

Utilize the opportunity to unplug from your work and personal responsibilities. Immerse yourself in the Empower Summit experience. Remain present, ask questions, identify new innovative ideas, and cultivate relationships with colleagues across various fields. Also, don’t forget to focus on self-care and your individual professional trajectory by participating in a one-on-one coaching session.

Our goal is to ensure that you leave with an elevated tool kit of knowledge, skills, and connections to support the expansion of your leadership journey. Ultimately, we want you to thrive beyond the status quo to accomplish the individual and organizational success we all seek to acquire.

Enjoy the Summit!

Kindest regards,

Donna Davis, JD

Assistant Dean of Leadership and Empowerment & Title IX Coordinator

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South Texas College of Law Houston

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Talking Talent

Ya-Ling Chuang, CPA

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Vivienne Kwon	ykcreative
June Liu	JQL Consulting, LLC
Ambrosia Chuang	Ya-Ling Chuang, CPA
Ronnie Hagerty, Ph.D., CFRE, CNP	United Way of Greater Houston

Association of Chinese American Professionals

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Peggy Liu	Photographer
Stephen Huang	Program Book
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C.C. Liu/Ambrosia Chuang	Website
Daniel Chen/Ambrosia Chuang	Whova

2026 Empower Summit

Program Schedule

Time	Event	Room
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7:30 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.	Registration	Sugar Land Foyer V
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Six (6) SHRM continuing education credits (PDEs) are available for attending the conference.

8:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.	Corporate Exhibits	Sugar Land Foyer V
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Please visit the exhibition booth of conference sponsors.

8:45 a.m. – 2:35 p.m.	Coach’s Corner	Sugar Land IV
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Professional coaches from the International Coaching Federation – Houston Charter Chapter will offer complimentary career coaching sessions. Sign up at the Registration Desk to take advantage of this exciting opportunity!

8:30 a.m. – 8:45 a.m.	Welcome Remarks	Ballroom V
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Co-Chair:

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

***Donna Davis**, Assistant Dean of Leadership and Empowerment & Title IX Coordinator,*

Agosto Justice Center, South Texas College of Law Houston

8:50 a.m. – 10:00 a.m.	Ice Breaking Exercise	Whova App.
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Through: ***Whova Application***

8:45 a.m. – 9:45 a.m.	Plenary Session I	Sugar Land V
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“Workforce Development: Opportunities in Challenging Times”

Chair: ***Donna Fujimoto Cole**, President and CEO of Cole Chemical*

Panelists: ***Michelle Mower**, Director of Shadow Cave Pictures LLC*

***Matthew Cushing**, Executive Director, Office of STEM Engagement at Rice University*

***Jacquie Young-Hall**, Manager, Maritime Workforce Development of Port of Houston*

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.	Speakers Session II	Sugar Land V
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“Civility in the Workplace”

Speakers: **Donna Davis**, *Assistant Dean of Leadership and Empowerment & Title IX Coordinator, Agosto Justice Center, South Texas College of Law Houston*
June Liu, *MPH, Principal at JQL Consulting LLC*
Renu Sachdeva, *PCC, PHR, MBA, Global Head of Coaching at Talking*

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. Participants 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	Sugar Land Foyer
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Visit exhibits and sign up for a complimentary session at Coach’s Corner.

11:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.	Concurrent Session I	Location
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Session A

Cane I - III

“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.

Session B

Sugar Land V

“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.	Keynote and Luncheon	Sugar Land VI
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Emcee: *Vani Rao, Executive Coach, VTK Consulting LLC*

Keynote Speech: “Houston’s Asian Study”

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

Team: *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.

1:35 p.m. – 2:35 p.m.	Concurrent Session II	Location
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Session A: **Cane I - III**
“AI as a Catalyst for Visibility, Voice, and Impact”

Speakers: *Nelson Vanegas, Chief Strategist, Goodspero*

Team: *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.

Session B: **Magnolia I - II**

“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, Chief Developer | CRIME NO CRIME, LegalWATCH*

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, Survey, and Gifts Winners	Sugar Land Foyer
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Networking Survey, and Gifts Giveaway for Winners

- *Please return all name **badges** to the registration desk for recycling.*
- *Please complete conference surveys on Whova or return the **hard copy** to the registration desk.*
- *All attendees for afternoon sessions will be eligible for a door prize drawing that will start at 2:35 p.m. You must be **present to win**.*



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Get to Know 2026 Empower Summit Co-Chair

Donna Fujimoto Cole

President and CEO Cole Chemical



Ms. Donna Fujimoto Cole is a third generation Japanese American, born in Denver, Colorado and raised in the Rio Grande Valley. In 1980, she founded Cole Chemical & Distributing, Inc., at the request of her customers because of her responsiveness, attention to quality and delivery service providing industrial and process chemicals to various industries. Some customers include Chevron, Exxon, Nippon Shokubai Americas, P66, and Toyota. She has started, sold, invested and divested many types of businesses from drilling loss circulation materials, chemical manufacturing, real estate, chemical distribution, warehousing, blending and packaging.

Donna's current leadership positions include: Commissioner on the Port of Houston's Marine Pilot's Board, Texas 2036 Board Member, American Leadership Forum's Houston Board, Mayor of Houston's Asian Pacific American Advisory Board, The Rockwell Fund Board of Trustees, Houston Association of Producers Board, The Institute of Supply Management Executive Advisory Board, the U.S.- Japan Council's Legacy Board and National Veterans Network Board Member Emeritus, Advisory Board Member of the Friends of the National Asian Pacific American Museum, The Hermann Park Conservancy Advisory Board, and the Museum of Fine Arts Houston Advisory Board Film Subcommittee. Ms. Cole also served on President George H.W. Bush's Export Council. She was awarded the Order of the Rising Sun, Silver Rays, by the Japanese Emperor and Government of Foreign Affairs of Japan in November 2021. Ms. Cole attended Pan American College and Southwest Texas Jr College, earned a diploma at Manpower Business Training Institute in computer programming and operations. Her continuing education includes the business executive programs at the Amos Tuck School of business and has also served on The Amos Tuck School's Board of Trustees. Donna's hobby includes growing herbs, cooking, Ikebana and she is a producer telling great stories about strong women and supportive men in films, plays, and musicals to inspire and motivate millions of women to take care of themselves, their families and improve their communities.

Get to Know 2026 Empower Summit Co-Chair

Donna Davis, JD

Assistant Dean of Leadership and Empowerment & Title IX Coordinator

Agosto Justice Center, South Texas College of Law Houston



Dr. Donna Davis, J.D. Assistant Dean of Leadership and Empowerment, Agosto Justice Center, South Texas College of Law Houston. Donna Davis, J.D., is an experienced practitioner who focuses on the justice, leadership and empowerment strategic vision, training, internal initiatives, and external collaborative opportunities for the law school.

Davis has twenty-four years of experience in higher education and has held various executive positions at law schools and university systems nationwide. She is also an organizational development consultant, and recognized speaker who examines various topics associated with our global differences.

Davis is a member of the National Association of Diversity Officers in Higher Education. She holds a Doctor of Jurisprudence degree from Southern University Law Center, Master of Science in Positive Organization Development & Change from the Weatherhead School of Management at Case Western Reserve University, and a Bachelor of Arts in Business Management from Dillard University.

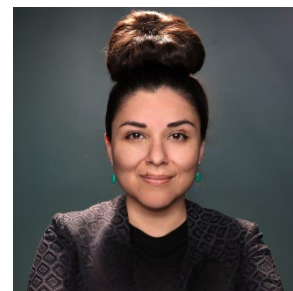
Speakers and Session Chairs

in alphabetical order of last name

Jessica Bolanos

Director, Digital & Impact | Education & Emerging Tech of Goodspero

At the intersection of strategy, storytelling, and emerging technology, **Jessica Bolaños** helps impact-driven organizations and business leaders leverage storytelling and digital tools to increase visibility, engagement, and reach organizational goals. With over 20 years of experience in marketing, digital media, and creative strategy, she is known for making new tech like AI easy to understand, to help teams build capacity, and amplify their impact.



Jessica is a mentor and visiting lecturer at the University of Houston's Wolff Center for Entrepreneurship, a mentor of RED Labs + Owl Spark, UH and Rice's accelerator program, a mentor and guest speaker for EWOP (Empowering Women Out of Prison), an East End Works Committee member, co-leads the TEDxHouston production team, and supports women's education and small businesses in LATAM as a micro-lender with KIVA.

Jessica holds a BBA in Entrepreneurship from the Wolff Center for Entrepreneurship at UH, is a Goldman Sachs 10K Small Businesses Alumna, was honored in the Cougar 100, and AI for Social Impact Leader of the Year Finalist by Women in AI.

Matthew Cushing

Executive Director Rice STEM Engagement Center

Matthew Cushing is the Executive Director of the Rice Center for STEM Engagement at Rice University, where he leads initiatives that expand access to high-quality STEM education and professional learning for educators and students. With more than 28 years of experience in education—as a teacher, instructional coach, and regional consultant—he focuses on preparing the next generation for an evolving workforce shaped by artificial intelligence, data science, and emerging technologies. Matthew works with K–12 schools, higher education partners, and industry leaders to design STEM learning experiences that connect classroom instruction with real-world innovation, including AI literacy, computational thinking, and technology-driven problem solving. His work emphasizes helping educators and students understand how tools such as AI and app development can be leveraged to create meaningful solutions and expand career pathways. He serves on the Texas Education Agency's Executive STEM Advisory Committee and is a Senior Fellow in the American Leadership Forum (Class LXIV). Matthew also contributes to several regional and statewide initiatives supporting computer science education and STEM workforce development.



Eartha Jean Johnson

Chief Developer | CRIME NO CRIME, Legal WATCH

Eartha Jean Johnson is CEO of LegalWATCH, an award-winning risk mitigation company she formed in 1997 after practicing for Exxon. Legal/Watch has consulting and consumer product divisions Eartha uses her business background, experience and the knowledge she acquired practicing law to help others avoid mistakes that often result in huge jury awards, compliance sanctions, negative media, and criminal liability. At the forefront of LegalWATCH's consumer products division is its groundbreaking criminal law board game, CRIME NO CRIME, that Eartha's family of all lawyers created to educate people on the law, with an emphasis on youth and young adults.



Eartha has earned a Juris Doctorate Degree, Master of Laws Degree in Energy, Environment and Natural Resources Law; Bachelor of Science Degree in Business Administration; and Associate Degree in Criminal Justice. She is also certified in training and development. She has served as President of the Houston Lawyers Association; Chair of the African American Law Section of the State Bar of Texas; President, Texas Executive Women; Community Organizer, NPursuit of Justice board, Houston Area Women Center Board Member, Women Business Enterprise Alliance and Houston Minority Supplier Diversity Councils. She is a National Founding Member, WIPP ("Women Impacting Public Policy"); and has served on numerous state and national boards, including the National Women's Business Council, a bi-partisan Federal government council that advises the President, Congress and the U.S. Small Business Administration on economic issues important to women. She is also a Trustee of the University of Nebraska Foundation and serves on the University of Nebraska Law School Advisory Board. Eartha is a WBENC Woman of Distinction and a member of the Women's Leadership Forum.

June Liu, MPH

Founder and Principal, JQL Consulting LLC

June Liu provides management consulting services for organizations at all stages of the social impact journey. June's experience is built on her management consulting tenure at Bain & Company, a top-tier global consulting firm, and her work to improve health outcomes and disrupt poverty for low-income populations. With over 15 years of experience in strategy, program design and optimization, and policy advocacy, June helps organizations integrate corporate effectiveness with mission-driven motivation.



She is also the creator of Civic Self, a program designed to help individuals and groups move beyond polarization by building self-awareness, engaging in constructive dialogue, and focusing on practical problem-solving. Drawing on her background in health policy, the Civic Self approach informs her broader consulting in civic engagement, including with higher education institutions and community-based organizations.

June holds a Master of Public Health from UTHouston and dual bachelor's degrees in biochemistry and policy studies from Rice University.

Michelle Mower

Director, Shadow Cave Pictures LLC

Mower is an award-winning screenwriter and director who has produced feature films, made-for-television movies, docu-series and commercials for Lifetime/A&E, Amazon, Apple+ and other streaming platforms. Her debut feature film THE PREACHER'S DAUGHTER, about a teenage girl who has an affair with the music minister of her father's church, was picked up by Lifetime/A&E, where it garnered the highest rating of an original movie on LMN in 2012. This success led to Mower writing and directing three more movies for Lifetime, most recently WHAT HAPPENED TO MY SISTER? (2022). Mower's independent feature THE NEVER LIST, about an overachieving teenage girl who's perfectly planned academic life is derailed following the death of her best friend, was accepted into the AMC Indie program and released in 112 movie theaters across the U.S. in December, 2020. The film can currently be seen on PayTV, VOD and AVOD platform and in numerous countries around the world. Mower produced and co-directed DAYNA STEELE: ROCK THE 36TH, a 2018 Amazon docu-series that followed a former rock and roll radio DJ's run for Congress. The series not only gave Mower the opportunity to interview music legends David Crosby, Joan Jett and Melissa Etheridge, it also led to her producing and directing a political ad for Mothers Against Greg Abbott PAC that went viral in May, 2022. Mower is currently in production on the documentary "Cinema Revival" and is developing a limited series titled "Last Dance On the Starlight Pier".



In 2016, Mower became President and CEO of Imagination Worldwide, an international sales and distribution company based in Los Angeles. For 6 years, the company provided opportunities for talented female filmmakers to get their first feature films distributed both domestically and worldwide. Some of the films distributed by Imagination Worldwide include Amber Tamblyn’s directorial debut “Paint It Black”, starring Alia Shawkat, Alfred Molina and Janet McTeer, and the 2018 SXSW Audience Award-Winning drama “The Light of the Moon”, directed by Jessica M. Thompson (“The Invitation”) and starring Stephanie Beatriz (“Encanto”, “Brooklyn 99”).

Mower received her B.A. in Radio/Television from the University in Houston in 2000. After graduation, Mower went to work for the NBC affiliate as Associate Producer for the morning news program where her primary job was writing news copy. In 2003, Mower left broadcast news to work for Southwest Alternate Media Project (SWAMP), a non-profit media arts organization based in Houston. Her primary function as Program Coordinator was to organize SWAMP’s professional development workshops, youth programs, film screenings, monthly filmmakers salons and special events. Through her work with SWAMP, Mower started “Lights! Camera! Action! Summer Moviemaking Camp” for teens and the annual Business of Film Conference at Rice University. Mower is the founding president of the nonprofit organization Houston Association of Producers. She currently serves on the board of 4th Wall Theatre Company and on the advisory boards for Film Fatales, Houston Community College’s Department of Film and Audio Production, Texas Southern University’s School of Communications and her alma mater University of Houston’s Valenti School of Communications. Mower previously served on the boards of Southwest Alternate Media Project (SWAMP), Texas Motion Picture Alliance (TXMPA) and Women In Film and Television - Houston (WiFT).

Daniel Potter, Ph.D.

Director, Houston Population Research Center Kinder Institute for Urban Research of Rice University

Daniel Potter, Ph.D., is the Director of the Houston Population Research Center at Rice University’s Kinder Institute for Urban Research. He leads survey research initiatives including the Greater Houston Community Panel and contributes to the Kinder Houston Area Survey, the nation’s longest-running metropolitan study. His work focuses on demographic trends, public attitudes, and data-driven insights that inform policy and community decision-making. Potter holds advanced degrees from the University of Virginia and has extensive experience in social science research, evaluation, and urban policy.



Vani Rao

Owner of VTK Consulting LLC

Vani Rao, owner of VTK Consulting LLC, works with individuals to align their purpose with their career. She has worked for more than 25 years in the corporate sector and most notably at BP in projects & engineering, continuous improvement, planning, capability and diversity & inclusion.

Vani specializes in empowering underrepresented groups to use their voices to get results and in helping companies increase profitability through inclusive work practices. She is also a 2012 APAWLI (Asian Pacific American Women’s Leadership Institute) Fellow, a signature leadership program for APA women. Vani supports charitable organizations in India focusing on the girl child and served on the Asia Society Women’s Leadership Series advisory board.



Vani has an MBA from Columbia University and BA in Psychology from Austin College. She is a certified trainer of Neuro Linguistic Programming (NLP), a project management professional (PMP), and is certified in Mental and Emotional Release (MER), hypnosis and Myers-Briggs Type Indicator.

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, Jung Center MBSI

Jasmine holds an M.A. in Clinical Psychology and Spirituality from Columbia University, where she specialized in trauma, mystical experiences, and spiritual healing. She is certified in Yoga, Meditation, and Relationship Coaching, and applies a psychospiritual approach to coaching, blending transpersonal and spiritual principles and practices. As the Director at The Jung Center's Mind Body Spirit Institute, Jasmine is eager to leverage her expertise to foster holistic wellness and personal growth within the community. She is actively involved in partnering with meditation studios and non-profits such as Unwind Studio, The Simmons Foundation, and Bread of Life. Her work in both private and corporate settings aims to inspire conscious leadership and meaningful change. Jasmine's intention is to reveal her own light to help illuminate the path for those around her, empowering them to reconnect with their own inner light.



Renu Sachdeva

Global Head of Coaching, Talking Talent

Renu Sachdeva is the Global Head of Coaching at Talking Talent, where she leads a team of world-class coaches who deliver excellence in coaching across a diverse range of geographies, industries, and clients. Her team is grounded in their mission of improving one million lives per year by developing their coaching clients into the powerful leaders of today and tomorrow, recognizing that their growth will have a ripple effect across all of the lives they touch in the workplace and in their communities. Renu has deep subject matter expertise in leadership development and building workplace cultures driven by connection and belonging. As an Executive Coach and facilitator, she is skilled at working with groups and individuals to have courageous conversations about topics that create meaningful change in the workplace, and she holds space for her coaching clients to explore belief systems so that they may expand their paradigms about self and others. Renu has worked in the professional services industry for more than 17 years in the areas of culture, belonging, and talent optimization. Over the course of her career, she has coached employees at all levels of organizations and across industries, and developed and facilitated innovative workshops on topics including inclusive leadership, cross-cultural collaboration, and psychological safety and belonging. She has previously taught courses to undergraduate business students as an adjunct professor, with the mission of developing the next generation of leaders. Renu serves on the Board of the Bauer College of Business Inclusive Leadership Institute at the University of Houston and the Mind Body Spirit Institute at The Jung Center of Houston.



Nelson Vanegas

Chief Strategist, Goodspéro

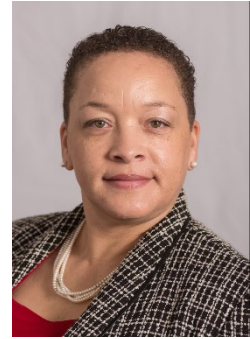
Rooted in the belief that stories and tech shape culture and progress, **Nelson Vanegas** uses visual storytelling and technology to help organizations grow with intention. With more than two decades of experience in multimedia storytelling and formerly a Production Director at Univision Houston, Nelson has led content strategies and production for media organizations, businesses, nonprofits, and now helps teams harness AI to strengthen narratives and advance their missions with intention. Nelson is an At-Large Board Member of the UH Hispanic Alumni Network, an East End Works Committee member, a mentor and visiting lecturer at the University of Houston's Wolff Center for Entrepreneurship, co-leads the TEDxHouston production team, and is a guest speaker for EWOP (Empowering Women Out of Prison). Nelson holds a BA in Mass Communication/Media Production, was honored with the Heart of Giving Award by UHHAN, honored in the Cougar 100, and served as the former President of the Houston Association of Hispanic Media Professionals.



Jacque Young

Manager, Maritime Workforce Development of Port of Houston

Jacque Young has served as Port Houston's Maritime Workforce Development Program Manager since 2017. In this role, she focuses on education and workforce initiatives for youth and young adults interested in maritime, logistics, and other port-related careers, passionately connecting students and parents with the vast opportunities within the Greater Houston Port Region. As the key liaison for Maritime Education and Workforce Development in the region, Jacque bridges industry, academic, and business partners. She actively shapes curriculum and career pathways by holding key seats on numerous CTE, post-secondary, and industry advisory boards. She also serves as the Board Chair for the Port of Houston Partners in Maritime Education, 501 (c)(3) non-profit organization. With over 25 years of experience, Jacque is a seasoned professional who has built deep expertise in workforce development, career education, non-profit management, and community engagement. She shapes the next generation of talent by engaging 10,000+ K-12 and 500+ university students annually — a passion that drives her purpose.



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Coaches Corner

in alphabetical order of last name

Anna Garcia

International Coaching Federation (ICF)

Anna L. Garcia, ACC is an executive coach, global career strategist, and speaker with 20+ years of leadership experience in technology and telecommunications. She empowers ambitious professionals to own their narrative, break limiting patterns, and design careers rooted in purpose and power. Known for blending corporate strategy with mindset transformation, Anna challenges clients to lead boldly, advocate confidently, and create meaningful success on their own terms.



Dr. Bruce L. Huntley

International Coaching Federation (ICF)

Dr. Bruce L. Huntley, ACC is an executive leadership coach who partners with leaders to strengthen their voice, expand influence, and lead with intention without compromising who they are. With more than 25 years of leadership experience, working at the intersection of leadership and culture since 1994, he understands both the promise and the pressure of driving meaningful change. Bruce brings coaching into spaces and to voices often overlooked, creating thoughtful, practical conversations that move leaders forward.



Sherri Osterlund

International Coaching Federation (ICF)

Sherri Osterlund is an Executive Coach with 20 years of successfully advising and supporting Financial Services, Healthcare, and Oil and Gas leaders. Most recently, she served as the Director of Recruiting for a \$4.7B credit Union, improving retention and the candidate experience. Sherri holds certifications in Emotional Intelligence, Gallup Strengths, and Human Resources. In May 2025, she earned her master's in Management and Leadership from the C. T. Bauer College of Business from the University of Houston.



Erin Reed

International Coaching Federation (ICF)

Erin Reed, MBA, CPRW, is a career coach and Founder of ER Resume Review, LLC. With 24 years of experience across the private sector and higher education, she blends strategic advising with transformational coaching to support professionals navigating career transitions, burnout, uncertainty, and difficult job searches. Erin is Birkman Certified and is pursuing a CliftonStrengths Ch

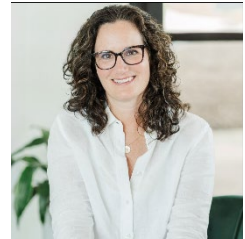
ampion Certification and an ACC credential with the International Coaching Federation. Erin is passionate about helping clients quiet limiting inner narratives so they can take authentic action toward fulfilling, aligned careers.



Jennie Reis

International Coaching Federation (ICF)

Jennie Reis is the Founder of Jennie Reis Coaching & Consulting. She partners with leaders and organizations to deliver executive coaching, talent strategy, and scalable leadership systems. Jennie has designed onboarding programs, leadership frameworks, and coaching solutions for global companies and universities. She brings 20+ years of Fortune 50 experience at Amazon and Target, aligning talent strategies with business goals. She is Co-Active trained and EQ-i 2.0 / EQ 360 certified, leading with curiosity, structure, and heart.



Elena Sarango-Muniz

International Coaching Federation (ICF)

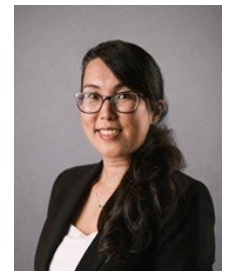
Elena Sarango-Muñiz is the founder of Sarango Executive Coaching and a bilingual (English/Spanish) executive coach and speaker who helps leaders become “safe to approach” using her proprietary BRIDGE framework. With 25+ years of global HR leadership experience, she translates emotional intelligence into practical behaviors that build trust, strengthen communication, and reduce escalation. Elena is certified in EQ-i/EQ360 and the Cultural Orientations Framework (COF).



Arna Shnaliyeva

International Coaching Federation (ICF)

GPHR, PCC, is a Global HR Professional and ICF-certified executive coach with 20+ years of experience in talent management and organizational development. As a former leader of Learning and Talent Management at Chevron, she led teams through major business transformations and periods of change. Today, Arna partners with executives and global professionals navigating career transitions, leadership growth and international relocation to lead with clarity, confidence and alignment with their unique identity.



Gerald Soparkar

International Coaching Federation (ICF)

Gerald Soparkar is a Houston-based leadership development coach and Learning & Development consultant with 20 years of experience across six industries — including eight transformative years in Beijing, China. He works with new, aspiring and established managers who desire to get and keep an edge on leading with impact and purpose. Gerald is a Massachusetts native, has an Executive MBA and loves Houston for its diverse food scene, cultural ethnic diversity. He brings a uniquely global lens to every coaching conversation.



Karl Streit

International Coaching Federation (ICF)

Karl Streit is an Associate Certified Coach (ACC) through the International Coaching Federation with over 10,000 hours of group and team coaching experience. He specializes in leadership development, team dynamics, and building high-performing cultures across nonprofit and Fortune 500 organizations. With more than 20 years of leadership experience, Karl helps individuals and teams unlock potential, drive performance, and achieve meaningful business outcomes through practical, results-oriented coaching.



Melissa Valenzuela

International Coaching Federation (ICF)

Melissa Valenzuela, NCC, ACC is the founder of MVMNT Leadership and a coach to high-performing leaders. With 15+ years leading large-scale operations and complex, high-stakes projects, she blends a sharp operational and systems lens with deep emotional intelligence and nervous system awareness. Her work illuminates the blind spots and behavioral patterns quietly holding leaders back, strengthening clarity, execution, and overall impact.



Sara Wilson

International Coaching Federation (ICF)

Sara Wilson, MBA, ACC is a leadership coach who helps individuals and teams rediscover their authentic center and drive measurable results. Before becoming a coach, she spent 15 years in Finance with Fortune 50 companies where she learned how much business success depends on people working well together. Today, she brings an analytical mindset to her coaching – helping leaders and their teams strengthen trust, navigate team dynamics, and unlock potential that leads to real business impact.





The Association of Chinese-American Professionals

ACAP is an association of Chinese American professionals with a wide variety of expertise, including engineering, science, health care, business, humanity, and arts and culture. Founded in 1978 and currently with a total membership of approximately 300, the ACAP recruits its members from but is not limited to the states of Texas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Arkansas, and Oklahoma.

In 2001, the ACAP, in collaboration with JPMorgan Chase, Shell Oil Company, and Marathon Oil Company, organized the inaugural Diversity Summit annual conference. This annual conference has gained broader support and attendance from other major corporations and organizations in the greater Houston area.

As a non-profit organization, the ACAP strives to foster professional development and fellowship among its members, facilitate the development of leadership skills of Chinese-American professionals, and address various issues that Chinese American professionals face in the workplace.

To encourage the professional advancement of the members, the ACAP regularly hosts technical seminars and workshops with various professional disciplines throughout the year. The flagship activity is the Science, Engineering, and Technology Seminars (SETS) held in Houston in the spring/ summer of each year. These seminars, workshops, and conferences are multidisciplinary and often involve guest speakers from other states and foreign countries. SETS usually draw 200 to 300 participants.

For more information on ACAP, please visit the website at <http://www.acap-usa.org/>.

A black and white photograph of a woman in a Shell uniform, including a hard hat, safety glasses, and gloves, walking through an industrial facility. The background shows complex piping and structural elements.

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