

The Center on Philanthropy and Public Policy at USC Launches Irene Hirano Inouye Philanthropic Leadership Fund

October 6, 2016 – Bold philanthropic leadership is critical to addressing community problems. Yet, foundations can only chart such a course if there is effective governance between foundation boards and their executives.

To this end, The USC Center on Philanthropy and Public Policy (The Center) has launched a fund to support research and programs to explore foundation leadership as it solves society’s most pressing problems, in honor of Irene Hirano Inouye.



Irene Hirano Inouye, President,
U.S.-Japan Council
(Photo/Courtesy of Irene
Hirano Inouye)

Hirano Inouye, President of the U.S.-Japan Council, has chaired the boards of The Kresge Foundation and Ford Foundation, and continues to serve as a member of both. The fund was inspired by her exemplary leadership and success in building effective foundation boards. A recipient of bachelor’s and master’s degrees in Public Administration from the University of Southern California, Hirano Inouye is the former President and founding CEO of the Japanese American National Museum in Los Angeles and is an active member of the American Academy of Arts & Sciences.

“Irene exemplifies what bold and thoughtful philanthropic leadership should look like,” says Darren Walker, President, Ford Foundation. “She understands the dynamic interplay between board members and their executives, discovering how and when to take calculated risks. She also understands the important role organizational culture plays in a foundation’s ability to deliver on its promises.”

The Fund will elevate and amplify the role of philanthropic leadership in strategies for scaling impact, bringing greater attention to the issues of shared governance between boards and executives in foundations. The creation of cases and applied research will be shared with foundation boards to stimulate conversations about their roles and responsibilities, enabling them to provide bold leadership in addressing critical public problems.

“Foundation governance, and more specifically the relationship between foundation CEO’s and trustees, has not been sufficiently studied in our field,” says Fred Ali, President and CEO, Weingart Foundation, who also chairs The Center’s Board of Advisors. “The Center is well-positioned to do the kind of actionable research and to create the type of programs that will stimulate conversations among philanthropic leaders.”

The new activities are made possible by an endowed fund The Center is building with a goal of \$1 million, which it hopes to reach this year. To date, \$750,000 has been raised with support from the Ford Foundation, Irene Hirano Inouye, Leonetti O'Connell Family Foundation, The David and Lucile Packard Foundation and Weingart Foundation.

The Center on Philanthropy and Public Policy promotes more effective philanthropy and strengthens the nonprofit sector through research that informs philanthropic decision-making and public policy to advance community problem solving. The Center is a part of the USC Sol Price School of Public Policy, which works to improve the quality of life for people and their communities, here and abroad.

For more information:

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