



Aurora

A newsletter for members and friends of AE²C

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Two Words for the Future: Clean Energy

United States Energy Secretary Dr. Ernest Moniz galloped into AAPI Heritage month with two words – ***clean energy***. As the keynote speaker in the joint AE²C/DOE heritage month celebration event held May 15th in Washington D.C., Secretary Moniz propounded the importance of investing in clean energy, which can yield important dividends for the future: clean energy helps mitigate the risks associated with climate change; it supports our economy, fosters innovation and creates jobs; and it provides energy security for us, our children and our children's children. Secretary Moniz also talked about the important role Asian Americans have played over the years to help build our nation. He, however, noted that Asian Americans currently account for only 5% of the Federal workforce and stressed the need for the Government to do more to benefit from the talents of the community.

The event was well attended by AE²C members and guests, employees of The Department of Energy in Washington D.C. and around the country through live web access. Ms. Emily Duong, Minorities in Energy Initiative Ambassador and 2013 Pacific Miss Asian American, served as Mistress of Ceremonies. AE²C President, Bob Gee welcomed the audience and shared some background on AE²C. Dr. Andre Sayles, Principal Deputy Director of the Office of Economic Impact and Diversity and Ms. Marilyn Madarang, vice president of the Energy Asian American Pacific Islander network also provided remarks.





Building Bridges Instead of Walls

Consistent with the theme for AAPI Heritage month, “Diverse Leadership and Expanding Opportunity – An Imperative for America,” Dr. James Meng, Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Navy, closed the AAPI heritage month event with a presentation on how Asian Americans, and others inside and outside of government, could better their career prospects. He cited General Collin Powell’s definitions of a leader and reminded the audience to have confidence in oneself and be agile in one’s thoughts and actions. Dr. Meng talked about Asian American stereotypes and reiterated the need for the community to promote itself based on the knowledge and experience it brings to the workforce.

Dr. Meng’s three takeaways:

- Engage by understanding how cultural differences are valued in the workplace;
- Leverage opportunities for self-improvement; and
- Remember to build bridges instead of walls.

Adding Value by Expanding Opportunity

A Panel entitled “Diversity in Leadership – Adding Value by Expanding Opportunity” discussed the Asian experience in the workplace and the importance of culture, political and business acumen, situational awareness, and knowing oneself and one’s goals. Ms. Afroze Mohammad moderated the Panel and Panelists Dr. Margaret Chu, Ms. Rosie Abriam and Ms. Laura Clise discussed how they got started in their professional careers and provided insights based on their personal experiences. The Panelists shared their thoughts on how they added value throughout their careers in both government and industry, and stressed the important role of cultural values that underlies and guides career decisions and actions. Panelists also discussed how gender, language and education pose barriers as well as provide opportunities in life.

The overall message from the Panel was that turning challenges into opportunities is the key to success for Asian Americans and for all ethnicities and cultures.

An introduction to AE²C

(A summary of Bob Gee’s AAPI Heritage Month Celebration remarks)

First, we seek to overcome barriers. The story of America is its growing diversity, and Asian Americans are part of this story. But there have been barriers. Sometimes they are subtle and sometimes they have been overt. Today, we join the DOE to embrace a diverse workforce as a strength for our country, and not a weakness.

Second, we seek to open opportunities. Energy and environmental matters have a global reach. What happens here -- and in Asia -- affects the planet, both positively and negatively. The countries of Asia, together with the United States, must work together to meet the world’s needs for energy resources, while preserving our environment. As expressed in AE²C’s mission statement, we seek to “bridge the values, business practices, and cultures of Asia and the United States.”

Finally, we seek to give back. Many of us have had the benefit of years of experience, and we desire to assist those just now seeking to enter the workforce or to elevate others to higher positions. Only through our education and mentorship efforts can we be assured that the best and brightest from our communities attain their highest potential, to the betterment of our country and its successive generations.

Three years ago, a number of friends and strangers decided to form this organization to realize these ideals. Our work has only just begun, and we are heartened today by the support from the Department of Energy as we forge a bond in common purpose.



AE²C Board Members and DOE MIE Ambassadors join Secretary Moniz at AAPI heritage Month Celebration