



California Humanities Welcomes Rick Noguchi as President & CEO

For Immediate Release

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April 11, 2023—(Oakland, CA)— California Humanities is pleased to announce Rick Noguchi as its new President & CEO. Chosen after a national and competitive search, Noguchi brings to the position more than 20 years of experience in programming, planning, fundraising, management, and strategic grantmaking in the nonprofit sector. His unique background in philanthropy, service delivery, and the humanities will enable him to bring bold thinking and innovative approaches to the organization, which supports and delivers public humanities programs that explore California's diverse cultures and history. His tenure begins in May 2023.

Noguchi succeeds Julie Fry, who is stepping down from the position after more than eight years at the helm.

Board chair Oliver Rosales commented, "As board chair for California Humanities, I'm thrilled to have Rick Noguchi come on board as President & CEO of California Humanities. Rick possesses a unique skill set that made him stand out in the search process--a combination of humility, experience, organizational thinking, all combined with deep content knowledge of the humanities landscape in California. I'm excited to see California Humanities under his leadership and am confident he will help the organization expand its reach across the state, all within an eye toward equity and access for all."

Noguchi currently serves as the Chief Operating Officer at the Japanese American National Museum (JANM) in Los Angeles, where he leads the strategic direction of the museum and oversees programs and external relations.

Noguchi's previous experience at the James Irvine Foundation and California Community Foundation will also inform his approach to equitable grantmaking practices. As a Senior Program Officer in Arts at the Irvine Foundation from 2008-2015, he was responsible for the only open application grantmaking program that focused on small and midsize organizations, and was deeply involved in developing an arts engagement field-building strategy; from 2005-2008, as a Program Officer in Arts and Human Development at the California Community

Foundation, Noguchi developed and implemented grantmaking strategies for major projects in the areas of arts, aging, individuals with disabilities, and at-risk/foster youth.

Joining California Humanities is a full-circle moment for Noguchi, who started his professional career at Arizona Humanities in the 1990s. There, he designed and implemented “Transforming Barbed Wire,” the first council-conducted project that explored the history and reconciliation of American concentration camps in Arizona that unjustly incarcerated Japanese Americans, during World War II.

“It is a magnificent honor for me to serve as the President & CEO of California Humanities, especially because I believe deeply in the power of the humanities,” said Noguchi. “I am grateful for the board’s confidence in me to lead this important statewide organization, particularly at this moment in time when California and the nation needs the humanities more than ever to cultivate empathy and bridge divides. I am energized to advance California Humanities’ commitment to equity and social justice.”

Born in Los Angeles, Noguchi is also a published poet, children’s book author, and avid surfer. His books include *The Ocean Inside Kenji Takezo* (University of Pittsburgh Press), *The Wave He Caught* (Pearl Editions), and *Flowers from Mariko* (Lee and Low Books). Noguchi serves on the board of the California Association of Museums and the recently concluded Advisory Committee for the Los Angeles County Department of the Arts’ Cultural Equity and Inclusion Initiative. He has a Master of Fine Arts degree from Arizona State University and a Masters of Business Administration from Pepperdine University.

About California Humanities:

California Humanities, a statewide nonprofit partner of the National Endowment for the Humanities, promotes the humanities—focused on ideas, conversation and learning—as relevant, meaningful ways to understand the human condition and connect people to each other in order to help strengthen California. California Humanities has provided grants and programs across the state since 1975. To learn more, visit calhum.org, or like and follow on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), and [Instagram](#).

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