

To our members and supporters,

Thank you for your continued support of the Los Angeles World Affairs Council & Town Hall. Today, we have two organizational updates to share with you.

First, we are thrilled to announce that Dr. Richard Downie has been named as the new President & Chief Executive Officer of the Los Angeles World Affairs Council & Town Hall. His tenure begins today, March 18.

Dr. Downie brings a wealth of experience and a proven track record of leadership, innovation, and organizational growth, having most recently served as President & CEO of the World Affairs Council of Orange County.

A graduate of the United States Military Academy (USMA) at West Point, Dr. Downie holds an M.A. and Ph.D. in International Relations from the University of Southern California. During his distinguished military career, Dr. Downie served in various command and staff positions, including as first commander of the Western Hemisphere Institute for Security Cooperation (WHINSEC) at Ft. Benning, Georgia. Beyond the military, Dr. Downie has held several leadership roles, including nine years as Director of the William J. Perry Center for Hemispheric Defense Studies, the Department of Defense's regional security Center for the Americas.

Dr. Downie's extensive leadership experience and proven success in strengthening organizations make him an exceptional choice to lead the Los Angeles World Affairs Council & Town Hall. His commitment to international dialogue aligns perfectly with our mission.

Dr. Downie, commenting on his new role, said, "I am honored to join the Los Angeles World Affairs Council & Town Hall, an organization with a rich history of promoting informed discussions on global issues. I look forward to meeting our members and audience as we work to foster a deeper understanding of international affairs."

Amidst the excitement of Dr. Downie's appointment, we also have a bittersweet staff update. Rachel Kenderdine, who has served as our Community Manager since 2021, will leave the Council this spring as she and her husband return to the East Coast to be closer to family. During her time at LAWACTH, she managed membership, communications, livestreams, and our high school program, and she sincerely enjoyed connecting with you, our members and audience.

Rachel's last full-time day was Friday, March 8, but through early May, she will continue to work part-time to support the transition. We want to extend our best wishes to Rachel, and if you would like to reach out to her to do the same, please send an email to rkenderdine@lawacth.org.

As Dr. Downie joins LAWACTH, we look forward to a new chapter full of exciting events and opportunities for our audience. We can't wait to see you soon.

Sincerely,

Hon. Maria Contreras-Sweet
Chairman of the Board of Directors
Los Angeles World Affairs Council & Town Hall