



LOS ANGELES
World Affairs Council
& Town Hall

To our members and supporters,

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

First, we are pleased to share that our new Chairwoman, Honorable Maria Contreras-Sweet, is bringing her vast management experience as a corporate executive, entrepreneur, state and presidential cabinet member to our reorganizational process. Already making significant progress, we are delighted to announce that Dr. Richard Downie has been named as our new President & Chief Executive Officer.



Hon. Maria Contreras-Sweet (left) and Dr. Richard Downie (right).

Dr. Downie brings 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 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 proven success in strengthening organizations make him an exceptional choice. His commitment to international dialogue aligns perfectly with our mission.

Dr. Downie 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 and pressing local affairs."

If you would like to welcome Dr. Downie to LAWACTH, please send him an email at rdownie@lawac.org.

Also, Rachel Kenderdine, who has served as our Community Manager since 2021, will be leaving the Council this May 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. She sincerely enjoyed connecting with you, our members and audience. 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.

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,

The Board of Directors
Los Angeles World Affairs Council & Town Hall