

NOTICE OF PUBLIC MEETING

The Nebraska Asian American Affairs Commission will hold a public meeting on:

Date: Monday, May 5, 2025

Time: 3:00 PM – 5:00 PM

Location: Harper Center, Creighton University
602 N. 20th Street, Omaha, NE 68178

Agenda:

- Call to Order
- Public Comment
- Approval of Minutes
- Executive Director Update
- Asian Week Update – Creighton University
- Legislative Update
- Bylaw Ratification Update
- Announcements
- Adjournment

A copy of the Nebraska Open Meeting Act will be available at the meeting location for public inspection.

The meeting is open to the public. Any interested parties are invited to attend.

For additional information or special accommodations, please contact Ryo Suzuki, Chair, at suzukir2@unk.edu or 308-627-8248.

Asian American Affairs Commission of Nebraska

Board Meeting Agenda

Date: Monday, May 5, 2025

Time: 3:00 PM – 5:00 PM

Location: Harper Center, Creighton University

Address: 602 N. 20th Street, Omaha, NE 68178

Agenda: Meeting called to order at 3:02 pm by Chair Suzuki.

- 1. Call to Order** Roll call, with a quorum of Commissioners present: Ryo Suzuki, Weysan Dun, Carol Wang, Tram Kieu, Maureen Brase, Carolina Mapes, Dr. Maorong Jiang, Dr. Deepak Gangahar, Arunkumar Pondicherry.
 - Roll Call Absent, Excused: Dr. Joanne Li, Rebecca Jueyezi Reinhardt, Dr. Yunwoo Nam, Hiep Vu, Vickie Sakurada Schaepler.
 - Statement of Compliance with Nebraska Open Meeting Act (Open Meeting Act posted in the meeting room) Posted.
- 2. Public Comment** No comments.
 - Open floor for public comments (limited to 3 minutes per speaker)
- 3. Approval of Minutes** Motion by Comm. Pondicherry, seconded by Comm. Dun. Roll Call with all 9 present Commissioners in favor: Suzuki, Dun, Wang, Kieu, Brase, Mapes, Dr. Jiang, Dr. Gangahar, Pondicherry.
 - Review and approval of minutes from the previous meeting
- 4. Executive Director Update** Job has been posted, link in packet. Share with community, friends. Asian descent, narrow pool, looking for best candidate. 30 day posting, but can extend depending on applicant pool. June 2nd close.
 - Status of Executive Director search and next steps
- 5. Asian Week Update – Creighton University**
*See below.
 - Presentation and discussion led by Maorong
 - Opportunities for Commission involvement and support
- 6. Legislative Update** Nikki Swope, Fiscal Analyst - "has been fantastic to work with, can't thank you enough," Chair Ryo.
 - Report on relevant legislative developments Jackson Farnsworth
 - Discussion on Commission engagement and next steps

Agency submits budget package through DHS dept./Governor's budget. Legislative fiscal office reviews, then submits analysis. Annualization - carries over funds to use in next biennium (usually withdrawn leftover funds unless special request). Appropriations committee looks at all positions, including vacancies. Once fully staffed with 3 people - this budget. When Comm. was created, certain funds were allocated. PSL - total amount of \$ that can be spent on salaries, doesn't include health benefits. ED range \$80-95,000/year. 40-step pay scale raise in NE. Some flexibility where you can start a pay range. 40% = health ins. & retirement benefits. Appropriations Committee doesn't

usually put out a budget with a deficit, but now significant shortfall. General consensus among legislature to protect health & salary increases, pretty important. LB261, main appropriations. LB260 Gov's budget. (Dr. Gangahar - get the best ED we need.) A prospective candidate can forgo benefits, but doesn't lead to higher pay. We're in unique position since we're new, just starting out. LB1300A. Indian Affairs ED there 30 years; African Amer. 5 EDs. State job less pay than private sector. Remote work ok until office secured. Current fiscal year ends June 30th.

7. Bylaw Update

- Confirmation that Commission bylaws have been ratified
Ryan Baker, A.G. Office

8. Announcements

*See below.

- Upcoming events and deadlines

9. Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 4:37 pm; motion made by Dr. Gangahar and seconded by Comm. Dun.

- Closing remarks

Next meeting Monday, August 4, 2025 @ 3:00 pm.

Note: A copy of the Nebraska Open Meeting Act will be available at the meeting location in compliance with state law.

5. Dr. Jiang - C.U. Asian World Center has been very active, promoting Eastern culture and thought. Thank you to Comm. Suzuki and Comm. Dun for speaking on their experiences. Comm. Dun - at C.U. event, people from the community, only a few Asians.

Sec. of State Bob Evnan & Cindy want to have annual joint event with Omaha Sister City (partnered with Yantai, China and Shizuoka, Japan) - Sandhill Crane Migration in Kearney. Send delegates & dignitaries. Promote business in our state.

His C.U. students each wrote a beautiful report on the Asian culture they have learned. Today is last class.

Students gave a presentation. Philosophy for Children (P4C) - regularly going to China. 20th Annual P4C. Used AI to make stamps, artwork, video. Last year everything paid through Global Engagement. This year all but airfare paid. WWII mentioned, but want us all to get together to prevent it. If haven't been to China, can't grasp. People to people dialogue essential for us to understand each other.

Dr. Gangahar - Harmony for all nations. Not for communist or dictatorships.

C.U. students present: Minh Nhat Truong, Nathaniel Clayton, Madeleine Van Delden, Ava Zimmerman, Lucy Woolf, Jiayu Chen, Fabian Alvarez.

8. Dr. Jiang - Sieu Mei Tu, annual inaugural lecture series @ UNO, endowed specifically by Dr. Harold Tu, oral surgeon, to deal with Asian Culture.

Dr. Gangahar - In the midst of anti-Asian hate, advocate to move beyond how we contribute to this beautiful Nation we call home. Communicate to move forward; create harmony vs. "us vs. them."

Chair Suzuki - Great Plains Theater Commons production by Sarah Cho, Korean Heritage. Metro Comm. College Yates Illuminates.

Comm. Mapes - wood block prints at Joslyn, from last month, for a couple more months.

Comm. Brase - spoke at NE Dept. Corrections for AAPI Heritage Month on experiences growing up in NE as an Asian.

Attended April's Independent Agency Meeting at Governor's Residence, then was given tour of State Capitol office space by the Indian Commission's ED Judi gaiashkibos.

Recommended book club reading: Hotel on the Corner of Bitter and Sweet, by Jamie Ford. Historical fiction - Japanese Americans, WWII internment camps, Chinese Americans.

Dr. Gangahar - Value of history - without knowing, we are doomed.

Job Title: Executive Director, Commission on Asian American Affairs

Location: Lincoln, Nebraska

Position Type: Full-Time

Reports to: Commission on Asian American Affairs

Job Overview:

The Executive Director serves as the chief executive officer of the Commission on Asian American Affairs for the State of Nebraska, responsible for directing the Commission's initiatives, promoting its mission, and overseeing all operations. The Executive Director plays a key role in enhancing engagement with the Asian American community, advocating for issues that impact the community, and ensuring the delivery of high-quality programs and services. This position requires innovative leadership, strategic oversight, and effective communication to manage relations with government officials, community partners, and the general public.

Key Responsibilities:

- **Strategic Leadership and Direction:**
 - Develop and lead the strategic initiatives of the Commission, ensuring alignment with its mission and state policies.
 - Provide visionary leadership to enhance the Commission's impact within Nebraska's Asian American community.
 - Draft policies and strategies to promote the well-being of the Asian American population through education, community involvement, and legislative advocacy.
 - Advise the Commission on key matters affecting the Asian American community, providing well-researched recommendations for program changes and development.
- **Community Outreach and Advocacy:**
 - Represent the Commission at public forums, legislative sessions, and civic

functions, advocating for the needs and rights of the Asian American community.

- Build and maintain relationships with community organizations, government agencies, and other stakeholders to enhance awareness and engagement.
- Organize and present testimony at the Nebraska Legislature on issues related to the Asian American community.
- Oversee the Commission's public outreach and education programs, coordinating responses to third-party inquiries and presentations.

- **Operations and Personnel Management:**

- Manage and supervise the agency's personnel, fostering a collaborative, respectful, and performance-oriented work culture.
- Set goals, objectives, and performance standards for staff, conducting regular evaluations and providing necessary professional development opportunities.
- Ensure compliance with state policies, legal standards, and financial regulations in the execution of programs.

- **Fiscal Oversight:**

- Prepare and manage the Commission's budget, working closely with the state budget division and legislature to ensure adequate funding.
- Identify and pursue grant and funding opportunities to enhance the Commission's resources and capacity to serve the community.
- Present the annual budget and significant revisions to the Commission for approval.

- **Policy and Program Development:**

- Coordinate and prepare for Commission meetings, reporting on the status of programs, initiatives, and fiscal matters.

- Ensure that data collection and program evaluation are conducted in line with state mandates and the Commission's goals.
- Provide the Commission with insights and recommendations for new programs or policy changes that would benefit the community.
- **Government Relations:**
 - Establish and maintain strong working relationships with the Nebraska Legislature, state agencies, and other governmental entities.
 - Monitor policy developments at the state and federal levels that may affect the Asian American community in Nebraska, keeping the Commission informed of potential impacts.
- **Other Duties:**
 - Perform other duties as assigned by the Commission to ensure the success of its programs and services.

Qualifications:

- A college or university degree in public administration, business administration, social sciences, or a related field is preferred; and/or
- Preferred 5 years of executive leadership experience and demonstrated success, preferably within a government agency or community organization.
- Proven experience in developing and leading strategic initiatives and managing personnel.
- Strong fiscal management skills, including budgeting and financial oversight.
- Excellent communication skills, both written and verbal, with experience in public speaking and legislative advocacy.
- A deep understanding of the Asian American community and issues that impact minority groups in Nebraska.

- Ability to work collaboratively with diverse stakeholders, including government officials, community leaders, and advocacy groups.
- Candidate must be a legal resident of Nebraska and of Asian American ancestry.
- Occasional overnight/evening travel and event attendance required.
- Must have a clean driving record to be eligible to drive a state vehicle.
- Grant writing skills preferred.

Executive Director Interview Questions

1. What motivates you to lead a government-affiliated agency focused on Asian American affairs in Nebraska?
 - a. (Assesses passion, mission alignment, and understanding of public service.)

2. How would you go about building trust and engagement with Nebraska's diverse Asian American communities, including newer immigrants and multigenerational families?
 - a. (Evaluates cultural competency and community engagement strategies.)

3. What strategies would you use to promote economic development within Nebraska's Asian American communities?
 - a. (Tests understanding of practical initiatives in business growth, workforce development, or public-private partnerships.)

4. Tell us about a time you had to establish a new organization, department, or program from the ground up. What were your first steps, and how did you measure success?
 - a. (Reveals leadership, initiative, and planning skills.)

5. This Commission collaborates with state agencies and elected officials. How do you approach working with policymakers who may have different perspectives or priorities?
 - a. (Assesses political savvy, professionalism, and relationship management.)

6. What's your vision for how this Commission can help position Nebraska as a more attractive state for international investment or talent retention?
 - a. (Looks for forward-thinking, economic development ideas, and alignment with conservative goals.)
7. How would you ensure that the Commission remains efficient, accountable, and aligned with its statutory mission while serving a growing community?
 - a. (Evaluates governance, budget awareness, and operational discipline.)
8. In this role, you'll be the face of the Commission. How comfortable are you with public speaking, testifying before the Legislature, and representing the Commission in the media?
 - a. (Tests communication and public-facing skills.)
9. What role do you believe data and research should play in shaping the Commission's programs and advocacy?
 - a. (Checks analytical mindset and evidence-based decision-making.)
10. What is your approach to leading and managing a small team or working with a volunteer board?
 - a. (Focuses on people management, board relationships, and leadership style.)

- I 1. Can you walk us through your experience managing budgets or expenses in a previous role? How do you maintain momentum with limited resources?
 - a. (Focuses on financial stewardship, resourcefulness, and operational management skills.)

- I 2. What questions do you have for us?
 - a. (Allows candidates to show their preparation, priorities, and curiosity about the role.)