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Asian Pacific Americans Answer the Call to Public Service

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WASHINGTON, DC -- 05/02/09 -- The appointment of three Asian Pacific Americans (APA) to the Cabinet of President Barack Obama marks a watershed for the community in [public service](#). "Clearly our country is breaking down divisions and nothing could be more emblematic of that than the election of President Obama," John Podesta, President of the Center for American Progress and the former White House chief-of-staff under Bill Clinton, told participants in a session on the

final day of the 18th Annual Conference of the Committee of 100, the leading organization of Chinese Americans. "There's never been a better time to go into public service."

During the discussion, leading Asian Pacific Americans in public service urged more than 400 participants, including about 150 young men and women attending the C-100's mentoring program, to consider a career in the [public sector](#). "Careers in public service do not take straight upward trajectories," Chris Lu, the White House Cabinet Secretary, acknowledged. Pay scales are typically lower than in the private sector. But "you have to take some risks in your career," he advised. "There are no perfect opportunities." Added Julie Chon, International Finance Advisor to the [Senate Banking Committee](#): "The rewards may not be monetary, but there are definitely other rewards that can't be found anywhere else." Karen K. Narasaki, President and Executive Director of the Asian American Justice Center, agreed. "The rewards when you are passionate about something are enormous," she concluded.

The panelists stressed the critical role mentors play in career development. "Mentors are incredibly important in whatever field you choose," said Lu. Later, at the start of the mentoring session, figure skating legend and U.S. [Department of State](#) American Public Diplomacy Envoy Michelle Kwan advised participants to be open-minded, to listen to mentors, and to work hard. "It's important to seek advice," she said. "Dream big and reach for the stars!"

The 18th Annual Conference of the Committee of 100 ended today. The conference marked the 20th anniversary of the organization and the 30th anniversary of the normalization of U.S.-China relations. Next year's Annual Conference will take place in San Francisco on April 8-10.

For more information about the Conference, please visit <http://conference.committee100.org/2009/>.

The Committee of 100 (C-100) is a national non-partisan, non-profit membership organization comprised of prominent Chinese Americans in a broad range of professions. With their knowledge and experience, the Committee has dedicated its efforts to a dual mission: (1) encouraging constructive relations between the peoples of the United States and Greater China, and (2) encouraging the full participation of Chinese Americans in all aspects of American life. www.committee100.org

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