

**“I encourage you to travel inward …”**

***Excerpt from the Closing Remarks of Thomas Phan, AAGEN Executive Director, at the First AAPI SES Development Program Inaugural Event on March 21.***

Each of you has already shown the ability and experience of an SES.  Your road to SES did not start today, but rather, many years ago. You have all chosen that noble road of public service, and I commend all of you for your choice.

I encourage you to travel inward, to self-reflect, and to build a foundation of emotional intelligence.  Only when we know ourselves and have understood strengths and weaknesses, then we can begin to master ourselves and lead others.

Leadership is not about character, but it is **character**.  *There are 4 core moral virtues that serve as the foundation for leadership:* ***prudence, justice, temperament, and fortitude******or courage.***

***"Only virtue makes man master of himself.  Leaders and superiors worthy and capable of governing and ruling others ONLY when their virtues are united to the right knowledge - Authority without virtue is dangerous and devoid of merit."***

Third, starting today, become committed or involved with AAPI community such as WHIAAPI, AAGEN, FAPAC, or other organizations, commit yourself to helping others.  As we are all indebted to others for our achievements, it is the desire of all of us to pass along the fruits of our good fortune.  With that as a motivating force, let us make it a priority to truly help the members of our community who are in need.

 It is only through working together and offering mutual support, community outreach and acknowledging the care and generosity of others that we all are able to thrive both at work and in society.

Our primary goals are to:

         Promote, expand and support Federal APA employees in their quest for leadership roles and career paths that culminate in leadership positions.

         Provide APA individuals with the tools they need to succeed, and the roadmap to get there—from training opportunities to coaches and mentors.

         Build cohesion, awareness and opportunities for collaboration across Federal agencies to foster partnerships that extend across the Federal government space.

         Increase awareness of the unique strengths and experiences of APAs in the broader Federal government community.

Thomas Phan, AAGEN Executive Director