



The Convening: Tri-Sector Innovation

July 16, 2026

Loyola Marymount University

Co-hosted by



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Welcome

Dear Colleagues and Friends,

On behalf of the World Trade Center Los Angeles, the Los Angeles Area Chamber of Commerce, and LMU College of Business Administration, welcome to **The Convening: Tri-Sector Innovation**, the second of three conferences as part of The World Comes to LA.

Today is all about bringing together leaders from business, government, higher education, philanthropy, and civil society to explore one of the defining questions of our time: How can we work across sectors to address the complex challenges facing our communities and our world?

The issues before us—from economic resilience and workforce development to sustainability, technological transformation, and social well-being—cannot be solved by any one organization or sector acting alone. Lasting progress requires shared purpose, mutual trust, and a willingness to learn from one another. Innovation flourishes when diverse perspectives come together around common goals.

Throughout today's conversations, I encourage you to challenge assumptions, share ideas, and seek opportunities beyond traditional boundaries. Meaningful change begins with authentic dialogue and grows through partnership and action. I hope you leave with fresh perspectives, stronger relationships, and renewed momentum to create a more sustainable, equitable, and prosperous future.

Thank you for being part of this important gathering. I wish you an engaging, inspiring, and impactful experience.

Warm regards,



Dayle M. Smith, Ph.D.

Dean, College of Business Administration
Loyola Marymount University

Agenda

TIME	DESCRIPTION	LOCATION
8:30 a.m. - 9:30 a.m.	Breakfast & Networking	St. Robert's Lawn
9:30 a.m. - 9:50 a.m.	Welcome Remarks	St. Robert's Auditorium
9:50 a.m. - 10:30 a.m.	Keynote: "Tri-Sector Innovation" with Jens Molbak, Founder of NewImpact	St. Robert's Auditorium
10:30 a.m. - 12:05 p.m.	Firestarter 1: "Healthcare" with Martha Santana-Chin, CEO of L.A. Care Health Plan <i>Moderated by Dayle Smith, Dean of LMU College of Business Administration</i>	St. Robert's Auditorium
12:05 p.m. - 12:45 p.m.	Lunch	St. Robert's Lawn
12:55 p.m. - 2:30 p.m.	Firestarter 2: "Talent Development & Future of Work" with Julie Zwissler, Global CMO of Office Beacon; Vincent Calip, Professor of Computer Studies and AI at Long Beach City College; and Maria Salinas, President & CEO of the Los Angeles Area Chamber of Commerce <i>Moderated by Rick Gibson, Editor-in-Chief of California Leaders</i>	St. Robert's Auditorium
2:30 p.m. - 2:50 p.m.	Break & Networking	St. Robert's Lawn
2:55 p.m. - 4:30 p.m.	Firestarter 3: "Building Sustainable Cities" with Freddy Puza, Mayor of Culver City; Heather Repenning, Vice President & Client Account Manager, Jacobs; and Miki Esposito, Assistant Director, Los Angeles County Public Works <i>Moderated by Eric Strauss, President's Professor of Biology and Executive Director of LMU Center for Urban Resilience</i>	St. Robert's Auditorium
4:45 p.m. - 5:15 p.m.	Collective Synthesis & Closing Reflections	St. Robert's Auditorium
5:15 p.m. - 7:00 p.m.	Cocktail Reception	Hannon Library Plaza

Speakers



Dayle Smith

Dean

LMU College of Business Administration

Dayle M. Smith, Ph.D., is dean of the College of Business Administration at Loyola Marymount University (LMU), where she leads strategy, operations, and fundraising for one of Los Angeles's most mission-driven business schools. Under her leadership, the college has significantly expanded its graduate portfolio, growing from three to nine graduate programs, including innovative degrees in business analytics, entrepreneurship and sustainable innovation, entertainment leadership, and a Doctor of Business Administration. Dayle also led LMU to become a signatory to the United Nations Principles for Responsible Management Education (PRME), reinforcing the college's global commitment to ethical leadership and societal impact.

In recognition of her influence, AACSB - the world's leading accreditor of business schools - appointed Dayle to its North America Advisory Council, where she contributes to shaping the future of business education across the region. She was also honored with the AACSB Patricia M. Flynn Distinguished Woman Leader in Business Education Award (2025). A sixtime honoree on the LA Business Journal's LA500: Most Influential People in Los Angeles, Dayle plays an active leadership role across the region, serving on the World Trade Center Los Angeles Advisory Board, the Los Angeles Economic Development Corporation Board of Governors, and the Board of Trustees of the Globally Responsible Leadership Initiative (GRLI). She is also ChairElect of Beta Gamma Sigma, the international business honor society.

Dayle is a Fulbright Scholar, prolific author, and former founder, bringing deep expertise at the intersection of leadership, innovation, and global business education.



William Powles

*Senior Director of International Trade
World Trade Center Los Angeles*

William Powles is the Senior Director of International Trade at the World Trade Center Los Angeles (WTCLA), the international arm of the Los Angeles County Economic Development Corporation (LAEDC). He is responsible for directing programs to attract foreign investment and businesses to the Los Angeles area, promoting international trade and partnerships in the region.

Originally from the United Kingdom, William has extensive experience in international trade and diplomacy, having held various senior positions in the British Government. Prior to joining WTCLA, he served as First Secretary in the British Consulate General Los Angeles, responsible for leading the UK's economic relationships with the Southwestern United States. In London, he served as Chief of Staff to the UK's first Chief Trade Negotiator, shaping and implementing the UK's first independent trade policy in 40 years.

A lifelong advocate of inclusive economic growth, William has worked throughout his career to expand underrepresented groups' access to economic policymaking. He holds a B.A. in international politics with courses from both King's College London and Georgetown University in Washington, D.C.



Nola Wanta

*Senior Director, Business Development & Strategy
LMU College of Business Administration*

Nola Wanta serves as senior director, business development & strategy for LMU College of Business Administration. She helps strengthen CBA industry connections by establishing partnerships and relationships with employers to better align our graduate education initiatives with industry needs. Additionally, she plays an integral role in advancing online initiatives and student services as well as developing new executive education offerings.

Nola most recently served as Director of Program Services for the MBA for Executives (EMBA) Program at UC Irvine (UCI). Prior to joining UCI, Nola held

various leadership positions in graduate program management, recruitment, and admissions at the Peter F. Drucker and Masatoshi Ito Graduate School of Management at Claremont Graduate University, UCLA Anderson, and UCI's Paul Merage School of Business.

Currently, she is completing her Ed.D. at UCLA. Nola earned an M.A. in social science, specializing in demographics and social analysis, and a B.A. in anthropology and social science from UC Irvine.



Jens Molbak

Founder

NewImpact

Jens Molbak is dedicated to advancing Tri-Sector Innovation (TSI) as a framework for organizations to thrive while contributing to the greater good, and he founded NewImpact to carry this work forward.

Jens has presented Tri-Sector Innovation at keynotes, business schools, the United Nations, and other global forums. He is passionate about inspiring and promoting approaches that make social and economic progress accessible to all.

A native of Seattle, Jens is an avid hiker, backcountry skier, and landscape architecture enthusiast. He holds an MBA from Stanford University and a B.A. from Yale University.



Martha Santana-Chin

CEO

L.A. Care Health Plan

Martha is a strategic and collaborative leader with 25 years of experience in payer and provider healthcare services. She has held roles in both the not-for-profit and for-profit sectors, including executive leadership positions at two Fortune 500 companies and a not-for-profit organization with over \$10 billion in revenue.

Martha has a proven track record of developing high-performing teams and leading them to implement large-scale network strategies, performance improvement efforts, delivery system transformations, growth initiatives, and financial turnarounds. Throughout her career, she has been deeply immersed in serving commercial, senior, and Medicaid populations, with a focus on underserved populations under risk-bearing arrangements. With a keen ability to frame a vision and to transcend strategy into tactics, she has galvanized people to collaborate and be empowered to drive results.

As a Latina leader, the eldest of nine and daughter of immigrants, Martha prides herself on understanding first-hand the struggles that low-income communities face. Her personal journey has fueled a passion for mentoring others to persevere and thrive in their life and careers.

Martha serves on the Board of Directors of the United Way of Greater Los Angeles and is a member of the Board of Directors and Executive Committee of the Integrated Healthcare Association. She holds a B.S. in business finance from California State University, Long Beach, and an MBA from the University of California, Irvine.



Julie Zwissler

Global CMO

Office Beacon

Julie Zwissler is the Global Chief Marketing Officer at Office Beacon, a leading provider of Managed Remote Staffing Solutions. A seasoned marketing executive with over 20 years of experience in entertainment marketing, Julie is passionate about helping brands build genuine connections with their audiences. Previously, she served as CMO at Fabric, an innovator in mixed-reality experiences for live sports, working with major leagues like the NBA, MLB, NHL, and MLS.

Julie's extensive career includes leadership roles at CBS, the NBA, the Lakers, Time Warner, and CJ E&M, where she spearheaded strategic marketing and sponsorship programs. Julie's expertise spans start-ups to Fortune 100

companies, crafting innovative branding and marketing solutions for top brands such as Hilton, MGM Resorts, Toyota, Fox Sports, and Nestlé.

A firm believer in the power of storytelling and community building, she also serves as a strategic advisor for Offleash'd, a platform that fosters connections through shared passions. She holds a master's degree in social entrepreneurship from Pepperdine and is recognized for her entrepreneurial mindset, strategic leadership, and commitment to driving impactful marketing initiatives.



Vincent Calip

*Professor of Computer Studies and AI
Long Beach City College*

Vincent Calip is a Professor of AI & Computer Studies at Long Beach City College, where he created the first Associate of Science in AI for Digital Transformation approved in the California Community College system – an ethics-first, no-code/low-code pathway designed to widen access to AI fluency. He is the principal investigator of the LARC LA-25 AI Literacy & Innovation Project, a 19-college collaborative across Los Angeles County, and an MIT Applied Generative AI Fellow.

Vincent holds a doctorate in education from California State University, Long Beach. His work sits at the intersection of education, industry, and civic partnership – aligning resources across sectors so AI becomes a driver of shared economic and social opportunity.



Rick Gibson

*Editor-in-Chief
California Leaders*

Rick Gibson has 20 years of executive experience at Pepperdine University, where he served as Chief Marketing Officer and Senior Vice Chancellor. He is the inaugural editor-in-chief for California Leaders Magazine, a

Los Angeles-based publication that seeks to tell the leadership journeys of California's most impactful leaders.

Rick is also the founder of MGR Development, where he coaches senior executives on mission and strategic clarity, purposeful living, and professional success. Through a transformative process called Visionary Voyage, Rick guides leaders toward positive growth by fostering deep awareness, insight, and action.

Rick specializes in mission and vision development to clarify strategic intent. He helps clients uncover the animating vision for their personal and professional endeavors, weaving these into motivating narratives that bring their projects to life.

Rick has served on the Board of Governors of the Los Angeles and Conejo Valley Chambers of Commerce, and as director and treasurer for the Rotary Club of Los2Angeles Foundation. An active community volunteer, he served as president of the LA5 Rotary Club of Los Angeles in 2020.



Maria Salinas

President & CEO

Los Angeles Area Chamber of Commerce

Maria S. Salinas is President & CEO of the Los Angeles Area Chamber of Commerce, the largest business association in Los Angeles County, representing member companies and serving the interests of more than 235,000 businesses across the Los Angeles region.

Maria took the helm of the organization in August of 2018, becoming the first woman and Latina to lead the Chamber in its 132-year history. An accomplished businesswoman, entrepreneur, and determined community leader, Maria's business acumen and financial expertise equip her to lead the L.A. Area Chamber.

Maria, a steward of the Chamber's new vision, "A Thriving Region for All," has reimagined the Chamber's role. The Chamber looks to the future with a vision to build an inclusive economy and lead in three pillar areas of

focus: advocacy work, global engagement, and community collaboration for economic growth and mobility.

Maria is an appointee to Governor Gavin Newsom's Commission on the Future of Work and named to his Business and Jobs Recovery Task Force. She represents the Los Angeles business community in state- wide policy initiatives with the Coalition of Regional Economic Association Leaders (R.E.A.L.), she is a member of the Board of Directors of Mobility 21, a regional transportation effort, and an appointee of Mayor Eric Garcetti to the MEXLA Commission, a foreign policy initiative between Mexico and Los Angeles. She serves on the boards of The Music Center, Pacific Council, UnidosUS, and Southern California Leadership Network, among others.



Freddy Puza

Mayor of Culver City

Mayor Freddy serves as Mayor of the City of Culver City, bringing more than two decades of experience in strategic communications, public affairs, and community engagement. As Culver City's first openly LGBTQ+ Mayor, Freddy is guided by a commitment to transparent governance, inclusive community building, responsible fiscal stewardship, and thoughtful growth that strengthens neighborhoods and improves quality of life.

In addition to his role as Mayor, Freddy has spent the past 20 years working in higher education, where he has built strong, trust-based partnerships between the university and local organizations, elected officials, and residents. Through this work, he has advanced collaboration, mutual accountability, and shared civic responsibility while helping institutions better serve the communities around them.



Heather Repenning

*Vice President & Client Account Manager
Jacobs*

Heather Repenning brings over two decades of public-sector leadership and deep experience in building healthy, resilient communities with a focus on cities, water, transportation, and sustainability. Her impressive background includes roles at Los Angeles Metro, the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California, and the City of Los Angeles, where she helped shape policy and infrastructure that impacts millions.

With her passion for building more sustainable, connected, and inclusive communities, Heather helps drive Jacobs' focus on creating brighter, more vibrant communities across California.

Heather earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in literature from Swarthmore College and a master's in comparative literature from the University of California, Irvine.



Miki Esposito

*Assistant Director
Los Angeles County Public Works*

Miki Esposito is the Assistant Director of Los Angeles County Public Works. She oversees the areas of Construction Management, Water Resources, Transportation, and Environmental Services. Miki leads the Resilience and Sustainability strategic focus areas for the agency as well as the Quality of Life – Homelessness Initiative at Public Works.

With an annual budget of more than \$4 billion and a workforce of 4,000 employees, Los Angeles County Public Works is the largest municipal public works agency in the United States, providing vital public infrastructure and services to more than 10 million people across a 4,000-square-mile service area.

Miki's career is highlighted by extensive government experience in executive leadership and senior management roles at the local and state levels. She

previously served as the Director of Transportation and Utilities for the City of Lincoln, Nebraska, and most recently, as Senior Policy Advisor to the Lincoln Mayor. A native of Oceanside, California, Miki brings expertise in natural resources and environmental law and policy, with a Juris Doctorate from Washburn University School of Law and a Bachelor of Science degree in Biology from Baker University.



Eric Strauss

*President's Professor of Biology and Executive Director, Center for Urban Resilience
Loyola Marymount University*

Eric Strauss serves as President's Professor of Biology at Loyola Marymount University and Executive Director of the Center for Urban Resilience (CUREs). With collaborative research specialties in animal behavior, endangered species management, urban ecosystems, and science education, Eric has extended the model for faculty scholarship by co-founding the Urban Ecology Institute in Boston while he served as a faculty member at Boston College and CUREs in LA, both of which provide educational, research, and restoration programs to underserved neighborhoods and their residents.

In addition, Eric is the founding editor of a web-based peer-reviewed journal, *Cities and the Environment*, which is funded in part by the USDA Forest Service. His research includes collaborative long-term studies of coyotes, white-tailed deer, crows, turtles, and other vertebrates, with a specialty in understanding wildlife in urban areas and the appropriate management responses to wildlife problems and zoonotic disease. His work also includes investigating the role of green space and urban forests in supporting healthy neighborhoods and how those features can be used to improve science education and restorative justice.

Eric has co-written multi-media textbooks in biology and urban ecology as well as hosting multiple video series on the life sciences and ecology. He received his B.S. in mass communication from Emerson College and his Ph.D. in biology from Tufts University.



Stephen Cheung

President & CEO

*Los Angeles County Economic Development Corporation and
World Trade Center Los Angeles*

Stephen's tenure has been marked by a steadfast commitment to addressing the region's most pressing economic challenges. By advancing initiatives like Together for LA, the Los Angeles Digital Equity Action League (LA DEAL), and California Jobs First, Stephen has positioned LAEDC at the forefront of efforts to uplift small businesses, institutionalize collaborative economic infrastructure, eliminate the digital divide, and promote sustainable economic growth.

Before joining LAEDC, Stephen held several key leadership roles in the public sector. He served as secretary general and managing director of International Trade and Foreign Affairs for Los Angeles Mayors Eric Garcetti and Antonio Villaraigosa, overseeing policies and programs related to the Port of Los Angeles, Los Angeles World Airports, International Affairs, Global Trade, and Clean Technology. Concurrent to his roles in the Mayor's Office, Stephen served as the director of International Trade for the Port of Los Angeles, the busiest container port in North America.

Stephen holds a Master of Social Welfare and a Bachelor of Psychobiology from UCLA.



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For a century, the College of Business Administration (CBA) at Loyola Marymount University has built a national reputation for developing impactful leaders and bold innovators. CBA is known for its top-ranked programs, academic rigor, entrepreneurial spirit, and commitment to business ethics, sustainability, and social justice. The student experience is invigorated by real-world learning opportunities across Los Angeles and beyond – internships, industry mentors, business case competitions, global conferences, networking events, and more.

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