



PRESS RELEASE

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UOG's Austin Shelton announced as new Obama Foundation Asia-Pacific Leader

University of Guam Assistant Professor Austin Shelton has been selected as part of the inaugural cohort of Obama Foundation Leaders: Asia-Pacific, a cross-section of 200 emerging civic leaders from 33 nations and territories in the region who will be part of a year-long leadership program designed to further inspire, empower, and connect them to change the world. The cohort will convene from Dec. 10–14 in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, for skill-building workshops, leadership development training, and to hear from a list of prominent speakers including former President Barack Obama and former first lady Michelle Obama.

The 200 leaders represent public, private, and non-profit sectors, and they work on a variety of issues, ranging from education to environment to entrepreneurship.

Shelton joined the faculty of the University of Guam in 2016 as an assistant professor of extension and outreach. He concurrently serves as the program director of the UOG Center for Island Sustainability and UOG Sea Grant. Shelton leads initiatives that support the transition of island communities toward a sustainable future. He coordinates the Guam Green Growth Initiative to advance U.N. Sustainable Development Goals and

stimulate island circular economy industries. Shelton earned a bachelor's in marine biology from Hawai'i Pacific University and both a master's and a doctorate in zoology with a specialization in marine biology from the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa.

While in Malaysia, the leaders will be joined by prominent speakers and thought leaders who will discuss topics such as progress and opportunity in the Asia-Pacific region, values-based leadership, and the intersection of purpose and entrepreneurship during a series of plenary sessions.

In addition to the Obamas, other confirmed speakers include:

- YB Hannah Yeoh, deputy minister of Women, Family, and Community Development for Malaysia
- Tan Sri Tony Fernandes, Malaysian entrepreneur and co-founder of AirAsia;
- Oyun Sanjaasuren, director of external affairs at the Green Climate Fund;
- Tim Brown, co-founder of Allbirds;
- Arthur Huang, Taiwanese entrepreneur and founder of Miniwiz;
- Helianti Hilman, Indonesian entrepreneur and founder of JAVARA;
- Aaron Maniam, member of the Singapore Administrative Service; and
- Pat Dwyer, director and founder of The Purpose Business.

The five-day event will also give the participants a chance to apply their skills and knowledge to various real-world scenarios while using creative, values-driven approaches to problem-solving. Additionally, to underscore the important relationship between service and leadership, they will participate in a community service project.

Each leader's journey of growth will continue remotely for a year after the gathering through webinars, a virtual speaker series, and support, amplification, and other opportunities from the foundation.

Sen. Régine Biscoe Lee and Cara Flores-Mays of Guam were also selected as inaugural leaders. Last year Guam attorney Julian Aguon was one of 21 leaders chosen to design the program. The full cohort for the program can be viewed at <https://www.obama.org/asia-pacific-19/#meet>.

The plenary sessions will be made available via livestream at [obama.org](https://www.obama.org).

The Asia-Pacific program follows the Obama Foundation's inaugural international leaders program launched in Africa in 2018 and represents the foundation's commitment to the region along with the belief that these emerging leaders, through the work they do in their communities, have the potential to positively affect change across the globe.

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Attached: Head shot of Austin Shelton

