



OFFICE OF MAYOR JERRY SANDERS  
CITY OF SAN DIEGO

MEMORANDUM

**DATE** : June 30, 2008

**TO** : Council President Scott Peters & Honorable Members of the San Diego City Council

**FROM** : Mayor Jerry Sanders

**SUBJECT** : Appointments and Reappointments to the International Affairs Board

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It is my pleasure to appoint Daniel Abbott, Jaalin Cheng, Cath DeStephano, Donovan Geiger, Ileana Ovalle, Elizabeth Robles, and Jason Wells; and reappoint Edward Mracek, Hsin-Chieh Joe Chou, Walter Lam, Feraidoon (Fred) Raafat, Patricia Reeve, and Anthony Samson to the International Affairs Board, subject to your confirmation.

Daniel Abbott is an Attorney & Associate for Seltzer Caplan McMahon Vitek and specializes in general business, real estate, corporate transactions, complex commercial disputes, and business litigation. He was previously an attorney for Matheny Sears Linkert & Long in Sacramento, California, and an Assistant Account Executive for Fleishman Hilliard in San Francisco, California where he provided marketing and public relations for international corporate clients. In 2000, Mr. Abbott was selected as an intern for the United Nations International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda, Office of the Prosecutor in Arusha, Tanzania. His unique background and professional experiences in international affairs has allowed him to work with people of very diverse backgrounds and cultures. Mr. Abbott received a Bachelor of Arts degree, cum laude, in Rhetoric from the University of California, Berkeley in 1997 and a Juris Doctor degree from the University of California, Davis in 2001. Mr. Abbott resides in North Park. He will replace Young Kim, who has resigned, for a term expiring March 1, 2009.

Jaalin Cheng is the Founder & CEO of Starbridge, LLC, a consulting firm that helps clients navigate through the international business transactional process between the United States and Asia. He is also the CFO and General Counsel for Diverse Spectrum, Inc., a retail apparel company. Previously, Mr. Cheng was a civil litigation and transaction attorney for The Watkins Firm, APC where he counseled clients on business related legal issues. Mr. Cheng's passion for international business and transactional law combined with his desire to bridge cultural gaps led him to establish Starbridge LLC. Mr. Cheng's

professional affiliations include active involvement in the Pan Asian Lawyers of San Diego and the Asian Business Association. He is also a member of the American Bar Association and the San Diego County Bar Association. Mr. Cheng holds a Juris Doctorate degree and a Masters of Law degree in Business Corporate Law from the University of San Diego School of Law. Mr. Cheng resides in Mission Hills. He will replace Edward Cramp, who has resigned, for a term expiring March 1, 2010.

Cath DeStephano is the Executive Director of the Citizen Diplomacy Council of San Diego, the agency that collaborates with the U.S. Department of State, United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and the Library of Congress to bring emerging international leaders to San Diego for professional, educational, and cultural exchanges. Prior to Ms. DeStephano's tenure at the Citizen Diplomacy Council, for more than 27 years, she was self-employed as an international professional speaker and workshop leader and provided presentations on leadership development, stress management, and interpersonal communication skills for multinational corporations and government agencies. Ms. DeStephano has also been engaged in various civic activities and served as Past President of the La Jolla Sunrise Rotary Club and Past Leader of the Foundation for Women which focuses on providing micro-credit loans for the poorest of the poor. Ms. DeStephano holds a Bachelor of Science degree in International Relations from Western Michigan University. She will replace Joseph Darby, who has resigned, for a term expiring March 1, 2009. Ms. DeStephano resides in Pacific Beach.

Donovan Geiger is an Administrator for the College of Engineering for San Diego State University. In this role, Mr. Geiger provides services and guidance for doctoral, interns, study abroad, and international students. Mr. Geiger established the College of Engineering's International Programs Office and was instrumental in launching three study abroad programs in Italy, Poland, and Germany. He also administers the Joint SDSU-UCSD Engineering Doctoral Program. Previously, Mr. Geiger was the Housing Manager of Embassy CES, a worldwide English Language Training school, where he was responsible for accommodating international students learning English as a second language. Mr. Geiger has been very active in the international community as a member of SDSU's International Programs Council, San Diego World Affairs Council, and the House of Pacific Relations. Mr. Geiger is an avid volunteer and has provided great leadership within his community. He currently serves as the Vice President/Vice Chair of the Tierrasanta Community Council. Mr. Geiger received a Bachelor of Arts degree in Political Science from San Diego State University in 1999 and a Master of Business Administration from California Pacific University in 2003. Mr. Geiger was nominated by Councilmember Madaffer, and resides in Tierrasanta. He will replace Rick Otis who is not seeking reappointment, for a term expiring March 1, 2010.

Ileana Ovalle is the Government & Community Relations Manager for Cox Communications, Inc. responsible for monitoring and negotiating franchise agreements and ensuring compliance with all franchise and regulatory requirements. She also serves as Cox Communications' key spokesperson and directs community relations activities on behalf of the corporation to educate the public and strengthen relations throughout San Diego communities. From 2002 – 2006, Ms. Ovalle was the Director of Government Affairs for Public Solutions, a communications and government relations firm, and

advocated for public agencies, corporations and small business owners at the local, state, and binational levels. Her experiences within the government relations arena has allowed her to successfully produce and represent new initiatives and innovative policies. Ms. Ovalle is fluent in French and Spanish and has been engaged in various cultural and international activities for more than 10 years. She studied French language, culture, architecture, planning and history at the University of Paris, Sorbonne and received a Certificate of Proficiency in 1998. She also serves on the Board of Directors for the Citizens Diplomacy Council and South County Economic Development Council. Ms. Ovalle received a Bachelor of Arts degree with academic distinction in Public Administration from San Diego State University in 1994, and holds a Master of Arts degree in Nonprofit Leadership & Management from the University of San Diego. Ms. Ovalle was nominated by Councilmember Hueso and resides in Point Loma. She will replace Hugh Constant, who has resigned, for a term expiring March 1, 2010.

Elizabeth Robles is a Deputy Sheriff-Detentions for the San Diego County Sheriff Department and is also a Notary Public. Ms. Robles has been engaged in civic activities and community issues since 2000, and has worked with various community groups in Orange County and San Diego to support grassroots efforts and projects benefiting the community. In 2003, Ms. Robles' research efforts resulted in increased safety of children/pedestrians while walking to and from elementary school. Her community service activities include air quality/air safety projects for Union de Residentes Para La Protección Ambiental de Val Verde, and advocacy efforts for renters for the Orange County Congregation Community Organization. Ms. Robles has been actively involved in serving the Latino community and is a member of the Latino-American Political Association (LAPA) and the Latino Police Officers Association. She is also the Second Vice President of the National Latino Peace Officers Association San Diego County Chapter. Ms. Robles holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in Political Science, Bachelor of Arts degree in Criminology, Law, and Society, and a Master of Arts degree in Urban and Regional Planning from the University of California, Irvine. Ms. Robles will replace Renee Kilmer, who has resigned, for a term expiring March 1, 2009. Ms. Robles resides in Nestor.

Jason Wells is the Executive Director of the San Ysidro Chamber of Commerce where he oversees and directs all aspects of chamber operations, programs, and resources. In his unique role in binational and international relations, Mr. Wells acts an advocate and liaison for business development and prosperity on both sides of the border. Mr. Wells has also been a great catalyst to proactively discuss and act on border issues and challenges facing the San Ysidro business community and the San Diego/Tijuana binational region. He is particularly astute at binational, business, and community relations, and providing growth opportunities for businesses and communities. Mr. Wells has effectively collaborated and enhanced business opportunities for San Diego, San Ysidro, and the City of Tijuana by establishing or serving on various working groups and committees. He is the Founder/Organizer of the San Ysidro Smart Border Coalition, and the Bi-National Border Chamber of Commerce, a historic conglomeration of Chambers of Commerce and economic development organizations from all five Baja, California municipalities and the entire border area of California. Mr. Wells is also a member of the SANDAG Committee on Binational Regional Opportunities, San Ysidro Regional Port of Entry Working Group, and the City of Tijuana Subcommittee on Binational Affairs. Previously, Mr. Wells was

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the Corporate Relations Manager for the San Diego Regional Chamber of Commerce for four years. His business affiliations include membership in the South County Economic Development Council, and Mexican Business and Professionals Association. He will replace Enrique Morones, who is termed out, for a term expiring March 1, 2010. Mr. Wells resides in Nestor.

I ask that you confirm these appointments and reappointments, and join me in acknowledging these individuals for their willingness to give of their time and serve the City of San Diego.



JERRY SANDERS

Mayor

JS:lg

cc: City Attorney Michael Aguirre  
City Clerk Elizabeth Maland