President and C.E.O. Fred Ali to Step Down from the Weingart Foundation
Miguel A. Santana Named as New C.E.O.

Los Angeles, September 29, 2020—One of the most influential leaders in advancing equity in Southern California, Fred Ali, president and C.E.O. of the Weingart Foundation, announced today that he will step down as head of the 69-year old private foundation effective January 2021. Ali has served as president of the Weingart Foundation since 1999.

“I will be forever grateful to our nonprofit and community partners, as well as our board and staff for their unwavering commitment to making Southern California more equitable,” Ali said. “Working together for justice, we have helped build a more inclusive region and touched many lives.”

"Fred is a one-of-a-kind leader who has devoted his life to supporting the nonprofit community and has immeasurably enhanced both the field of philanthropy and the Weingart Foundation," said Aileen Adams, who chairs the Foundation's board of directors. “While we will miss him dearly, our board is full of gratitude that Fred's vision and commitment helped transform us into an organization laser-focused on racial equity and justice with a diverse board and staff."

During Ali’s 22-year tenure, the Weingart Foundation made a number of significant shifts in policy that transformed the institution, gave essential support to the social change sector, and influenced the field of philanthropy. Significantly, Ali led the Foundation’s embrace of a full and long-term commitment to racial equity and social justice.

Throughout his tenure, Ali demonstrated an unyielding commitment to change the way philanthropy does business in order to better support nonprofit organizations. As nonprofits struggled to recover from the Great Recession in 2008, Ali engineered a path-breaking commitment to provide nonprofits with unrestricted operating funding in order to strengthen the sector’s infrastructure and effectiveness.

Over the past two decades, the Foundation has granted over $745 million to nonprofits, the vast majority of them community-based organizations providing critical services in low-income communities of color. The Foundation made significant investments in leadership development for young social change leaders, including the launch of the John W. Mack Fellowship program. In addition, the Foundation has become a leader in forging collaborative relationships with government, leveraging its resources and expertise as a long-time funder.

“Southern California’s social justice sector is stronger and more effective thanks to Fred’s leadership at the Weingart Foundation,” said Charisse Bremond Weaver, president and C.E.O. of Brotherhood Crusade. “He consistently used the position and resources of the Foundation to support nonprofit changemakers and lift
community voices, and when nonprofits were not in the room, he was the voice of equity. The nonprofit sector and philanthropy are so much better because of Fred Ali.”

Ali has also convened key civic leaders to take on large-scale, cross-sector initiatives to address structural racism and advance systems change. He led the formation of the California Executive Roundtable, a group of 16 foundation leaders from across the state focused on sharing best practices and taking aligned action to advance equity. Ali spearheaded the development of Bold Vision 2028, a community-led effort to build a 10-year plus initiative that aims to fundamentally improve the lives of a generation of children and youth of color in Los Angeles County by 2028. With the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, Ali helped create and lead the Committee for Greater Los Angeles, a multi-sector table that recently issued a key report outlining recommendations for a just recovery centering impacted communities of color.

“The philanthropic sector owes an incredible debt to Fred Ali,” said Antonia Hernández, president and C.E.O. of the California Community Foundation. “Fred not only built the Weingart Foundation into a powerful social change organization, he also brought community leaders together across sectors to work on big issues collectively.”

“With Fred at the helm, the Weingart Foundation has been an invaluable partner to our foundation, philanthropy and the community,” said Dr. Robert K. Ross, who is president and C.E.O. of The California Endowment as well as a board member of the Weingart Foundation. “In fact, many of the innovative partnerships that currently exist between philanthropy and government are due to Fred’s tenacity and foresight.”

During Ali’s tenure, the Foundation also changed its internal practices in ways that became a model for other funders, insisting that all staff have nonprofit operating experience, and becoming one of philanthropy’s most racially diverse institutions at the board, staff, and leadership levels. Ali’s commitment to equity and justice also led to the Foundation’s bold initiatives in impact investing, where it utilizes its endowment to support social and environmental justice as well as to promote diversity among entrepreneurs and asset managers.

Ali will be succeeded by Miguel A. Santana, the recent president and C.E.O. of Fairplex and former City Administrative Officer of the City of Los Angeles, effective January 25, 2021. Santana was unanimously selected by the Foundation’s board after a rigorous interviewing and vetting process. The board determined that Santana was its ideal candidate given his broad knowledge of Los Angeles County; his close working relationships with the nonprofit, philanthropic and civic communities; his in-depth understanding of critical issues, including racism and homelessness; and his life-long commitment to equity.

"We are beyond thrilled that someone of his vision and proven ability to get things done will lead the Weingart Foundation into our next era as we work alongside many partners to realize our collective vision of racial and socioeconomic justice for all," Adams said.

"It is hard to imagine what Southern California would be like without Fred Ali," Santana said. "Fred is not only a national philanthropic leader, he is a civic leader building consensus to advance equity, as well as a mentor.
and confidant to dozens of non-profit leaders and community advocates. I am proud to follow in his footsteps and continue the work and vision of the Weingart Foundation for a more just and inclusive region."

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About the Weingart Foundation

The Weingart Foundation is a private, nonprofit grantmaking foundation that partners with communities across Southern California to advance racial, social, and economic justice for all. Our vision is a dynamic and effective social change sector that is creating equitable systems and structures needed to achieve justice. Founded in 1951, the Foundation has to date granted over $1 billion to organizations, strengthening their efforts in human services, health, education, and community power building. In addition, the Foundation builds networks and collaboratives with philanthropic, public sector, and community leaders to advance equity and justice together. www.weingartfnd.org