



## NEWS RELEASE

**FOR RELEASE:**  
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### **WOODROW WILSON FOUNDATION NAMES RAJIV VINNAKOTA ITS NEXT PRESIDENT** *Founder of The SEED Foundation and former EVP at The Aspen Institute to Succeed Arthur Levine*

PRINCETON, NJ (March 21, 2019) – On the eve of its 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary, the Woodrow Wilson National Fellowship Foundation is pleased to announce that Rajiv Vinnakota will serve as its next president. Vinnakota, who co-founded the SEED Foundation in 1997, most recently led the Youth and Engagement division at the Aspen Institute.

A graduate and former trustee of Princeton University, Vinnakota has dedicated his career to educating, empowering, and supporting America's youth, particularly those from disadvantaged communities. His work as a social entrepreneur and non-profit leader has earned him national recognition in the form of prestigious fellowships from Echoing Green, The Ashoka Foundation and the Aspen Institute, as well as awards such as Harvard University's Innovation in American Government Award, Princeton University's Woodrow Wilson Award and Oprah Winfrey's Use Your Life award.

Thomas C. Hudnut, chairman of the WW Foundation Board of Trustees, said in his announcement, "We are thrilled that Raj Vinnakota will head the Foundation at this important moment in its history. Ensuring that the next generation of Americans has the best prepared, most inspiring educators possible has been the mission of the Woodrow Wilson Foundation since it was established. We now find ourselves in a moment of social and technological transformation that requires rethinking how we prepare and inspire those who will teach the next generation of Americans. Raj's leadership, passion and commitment to education and civic engagement make him the ideal leader for the Woodrow Wilson Foundation."

"Leadership development and civic participation is as important today as it was when the Woodrow Wilson Foundation was founded in 1945," Vinnakota said. "Nobel Laureates, MacArthur Fellows, Pulitzer Prize winners, Presidential and national medal recipients, and thousands of others have been Woodrow Wilson Fellows. This organization has helped develop and support many of America's most outstanding educators and civic leaders. I am proud to build upon this tradition."

Vinnakota will begin July 1. He succeeds Arthur Levine, who transformed the Foundation into a national leader in educator preparation and school improvement. During his 13-year tenure, Levine created a portfolio of new and innovative programs designed to improve educational opportunities, particularly for high-need communities.

Earlier this year, the Foundation announced its plans for the Woodrow Wilson American History Initiative, a bold national effort seeking to transform how young people learn American history and become better citizens. Once launched, the WW American History Initiative will offer a digital platform committed to making history more interesting and relevant for today's teachers and learners.

Current Woodrow Wilson Foundation programs include the Woodrow Wilson Teaching Fellowship, the Woodrow Wilson HistoryQuest Fellowship, the Woodrow Wilson MBA Fellowship in Education Leadership, the Nancy Weiss Malkiel Scholars Award, the Career Enhancement Fellowships, the Mellon Dissertation Support Program, the Mellon Mays GAP Program, the Course Hero-Woodrow Wilson Fellowship for Excellence in Teaching, the Charlotte W. Newcombe Doctoral Dissertation Fellowships, and the Woodrow Wilson Dissertation Fellowship in Women's Studies. For more information on these programs, please visit: [www.woodrow.org](http://www.woodrow.org).

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**About the Woodrow Wilson National Fellowship Foundation**

Founded in 1945, the Woodrow Wilson National Fellowship Foundation ([www.woodrow.org](http://www.woodrow.org)) identifies and develops the nation's best minds to meet its most critical challenges. The Foundation supports its Fellows as the next generation of leaders shaping American society.