

Knight appoints new VP of Community Impact, announces new strategic roles for AI and research



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To <sjohnston@tuesdayforumcharlotte.org>
Reply-To Knight Foundation <web@knightfoundation.org>
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COMMUNITY NEWS

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Dear Friend,

Today, Knight Foundation announced new leadership appointments that will advance our commitment to strengthening community engagement, information and technology.

Francesca de Quesada Covey has been named vice president for Community Impact. With 15 years of experience advancing solutions in community and economic development, de Quesada Covey will lead Knight's Community Impact program nationally and across Knight cities. She will oversee an active grant portfolio of over \$250 million across 26 cities—places where the Knight brothers once owned and operated newspapers. Each city's portfolio is guided by a locally tailored strategy focused on building stronger communities.

"Knight Foundation has long been a trailblazing advocate of community development, and I'm honored to carry that legacy forward," said de Quesada Covey. "My career has focused on technology and government, working to scale products that deliver economic benefit and build stronger, more resilient communities. I look forward to working with the exceptional team at Knight."

In addition, Knight announced two new strategic functions led by experienced Knight leaders:

Kelly Jin will serve as vice president for AI and Insights. Alongside her role as chief of staff, Jin will lead efforts to rethink how Knight uses data to assess grantmaking, unlock institutional knowledge to guide future investments and build a responsible, mission-aligned strategy for integrating AI tools across the foundation.

"In this new role, I'm excited to help Knight—and our grantees—make better use of data and feedback to drive meaningful change," said Jin. "This isn't just about technology; it's about equipping communities with tools that deepen learning and accelerate impact."

John Sands will serve as vice president for Information and Society, leading a reimagined version of Knight's Learning and Impact program. The new focus reflects the growing urgency to understand how information and technology shape society and to support research that informs policy and social practice in service of democratic values such as free expression, access to information and accountability.



"We are refining and refocusing Knight's expansive research portfolio to meet this moment," said Sands. "The implications of how we share information and connect with one another are profound and still not well understood."

"As we navigate a rapidly evolving world, these strategic leadership changes ensure we're not just keeping pace—but leading the way," said **Maribel Pérez Wadsworth**, president and CEO of Knight Foundation. "The appointments underscore our commitment to adapting with purpose and ensuring our work continues to strengthen democracy and empower the communities we serve."

Read the full announcement here: <https://kf.org/4kn7Lfs>.

ABOUT KNIGHT FOUNDATION

We are social investors who support a more effective democracy by funding free expression and journalism, arts and culture in community, research in areas of media and democracy, and the success of American cities and towns where the Knight brothers once published newspapers. Learn more at [KF.org](https://kf.org).



**John S. and James L.
Knight Foundation**

2850 Tigertail Avenue
Suite 600
Miami, FL 33133

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