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FEATURED

Harvard Economist Raj Chetty Named Carnegie Fellow for 2019, Wins 'Brainy Award'

India-West Staff Reporter May 9, 2019



Indian American economist Raj Chetty among 32 Carnegie Corporation fellowship winners. (opportunityinsights.org photo)

Indian American economist Raj Chetty has been named by the Carnegie Corporation as one of 32 Andrew Carnegie Fellows for 2019. Chetty serves as the William A. Ackman professor of public economics at Harvard. For receiving the so-called “Brainy Award,” Chetty will receive a grant of up to \$200,000, making it possible for him to devote significant time to research, writing and publishing in the humanities and social sciences.

“I’m delighted and honored to have been chosen as a recipient of the Carnegie fellowship,” Chetty told the Harvard Gazette. “I intend to use the fellowship to dedicate more time to our team’s work on restoring the American dream at [the research policy institute] Opportunity Insights, focusing specifically on how we can improve children’s opportunities in communities that currently offer limited prospects for upward income mobility.”

Chetty’s scholarship has been widely cited in the media and in congressional testimony, combining empirical evidence and economic theory to shape effective public policy.

He has received numerous awards for his research, including a MacArthur “genius grant” Fellowship and the John Bates Clark medal, given to an economist under 40 whose work is judged to have made the most significant contribution to the field.

The Carnegie fellowship program, now in its fifth year, is the most generous initiative of its kind, providing \$32 million in grants to more than 160 fellows since 2015, according to Harvard.

Its overall objective is to offer fresh perspectives on the humanities and solutions to today’s most urgent issues. Among the other project topics: how targeted ads interfere with elections; the application of Confucian ethics to the moral problems posed by robots; examining cultural identity and the natural world through the history of the bald eagle; how the impact excessive punishment of black women and girls impacts on our democracy; and the lasting environmental impact of the Vietnam War, it said.

“Andrew Carnegie believed in education and understood its influence on the progress of society and mankind. The Andrew Carnegie Fellows Program is an integral part of carrying out the mission he set for our organization,” Vartan Gregorian, president of Carnegie Corporation of New York and president emeritus of Brown University, said in a statement.

“Over the past five years, we at Carnegie have been very impressed by the quality, range, and reach of our fellows’ work. This year is no exception. We salute this year’s class and all of the applicants for demonstrating the vitality of American higher education and scholarship,” Gregorian added.

Gregorian noted that the fellows program includes a balance of emerging and established scholars from colleges and universities across the country. In this year’s class, 15 of the 32 fellows are from public institutions, including the U.S. Naval Academy, and half are women.

A panel of 16 distinguished jurors chose the fellows based on the quality, originality, and potential impact of their proposals, as well as each scholar’s capacity to communicate his or her findings to a broad audience.

The Andrew Carnegie Fellows Program is a continuation of the corporation’s 100-plus-year history of promoting the advancement and diffusion of knowledge and understanding by supporting the work of a host of institutions, causes, organizations, and individual scholars.

Each year as part of the nominating process, the heads of more than 600 institutions, representing universities, think tanks, publishers, and nonprofit organizations nationwide, are invited to nominate up to two individuals each for the fellowships.

For 2019, the corporation received a total of 273 nominations. Each underwent a preliminary anonymous evaluation by national experts in the relevant fields. The top proposals were then forwarded to the members of the jury for review and the final selection of the class of 2019.

The award is for a period of up to two years and its anticipated result is a book or major study.