

2021/02/01 Meeting Summary

February 12 is New Year's Day in the lunar calendar. Happy New Year of the Ox!

Summary of the February 1 APA Justice meeting is now posted at <https://bit.ly/3kxkqxP>. The meeting covered a report about MIT Professor Gang Chen, wife of Kansas University Professor Franklin Tao, transformation of the FBI since 9/11, an update on anti-racial profiling activities, and concluded with the announcement of a letter to Congress calling for a congressional hearing on the racial profiling of scientists and scholars of Chinese and Asian descent.

We thank the following speakers for their talks in the meeting: Krystal Ka'ai, Yasheng Huang, Steven Pei, Hong Peng, Mike German, John Yang, Maryland Senator Susan Lee, and Terry Lierman.

Read about the call for a congressional hearing here: <https://bit.ly/3jaatHd>, which includes these latest media reports:

- 2021/02/05 Science: [U.S. scientists want Congress to look into complaints of racial profiling in China Initiative](#)
- 2021/02/02 South China Morning Post: [Letter urges US Congress to hold hearings on racial profiling of Asian-Americans](#)

Franklin Tao Needs Your Help

Hong Peng, wife of Kansas University Professor Franklin Tao, spoke about her family's dire situation in the February 1 meeting. Professor Steven Pei gave an introduction. As the first case of Chinese American scientists going to trial under the "China Initiative," Professor Tao and Hong are determined to fight the charges and clear his name even though it has devastated and bankrupted their family.

Legal costs are expensive. A GoFundMe campaign at <https://gofund.me/5bf4adbe> has raised over \$280,000 by more than 2,300 donors for the Franklin Tao Legal Defense Fund as of February 8, 2021. When the campaign reaches \$320,000, a generous donor has agreed to contribute the remaining \$80,000 to meet the goal of \$400,000. Your help is needed to make a donation and spread the word to your families, friends, colleagues, and neighbors. See Hong's appeal at <https://youtu.be/w8EOql-xR9o> (video 10:29).

Read more about Franklin Tao's case: <https://bit.ly/3fZWJvK>

"We are all Gang Chen"

During the February 1 APA Justice meeting, Professor Yasheng Huang reported that Professor Gang Chen's case has galvanized the entire MIT and possibly the academia. Chinese American faculty members across the country have also gathered not just for Professor Chen's case but also seek next-step actions. Many parts of the criminal complaint are factually incorrect, as pointed out in this "We Are All Gang Chen" letter to MIT President now signed by over 200 MIT faculty members: <https://bit.ly/3aEebFt>.

Professor Huang reported on three main points:

1. There is clear evidence of government overreach and definitely racial profiling and targeting of Chinese American academics. Professor Chen's activities are fully disclosed; nothing is secretive. This is fundamentally an attack on academia as a whole. It is an overt criminalization of normal, day-in-and-day-out academic conduct and activity.
2. Long before Professor Chen's case, there is recognition that the government's requirement to disclose is not clear and not straight-forward (e.g., [JASON report](#)). It leaves lots of room for law enforcement agencies to potentially criminalize some inconsistencies. There is a clear gap.
3. It is important for the government to specify what is permitted and what is not in US policy over China. It is simply wrong to use the legal mechanism to realize a political and policy objective. Professor Chen's type of activities were in fact encouraged in previous administrations. There must be a conversation when there is a policy change.

On February 4, 2021, lawyers for Professor Chen filed a motion for [Sanctions for U.S. Attorney Lelling's Repeated Violations of Local Rule 83.2.1 as to Gang Chen](#). The motion alleges that Lelling chose to pursue ill-advised and unsubstantiated charges against Professor Chen as part of DOJ's so-called "China Initiative" in the waning hours of the Trump Administration. Lelling trampled on the Local Rules requirements and attempted to make the case appear to be something it is not. In his haste to get the case out the door before a new Administration takes over, Lelling chose to file a detailed criminal complaint and held a press conference to generate greater publicity for the case although the Grand Jury was available. Lelling's actions are wildly misleading to both the general public and to future jurors, according to the motion to sanction Lelling.

[A "We Are All Gang Chen" petition](#) led by Professor Jeff Snyder of Northwestern University was started about a week ago. It includes a link to [the call for a congressional hearing](#) started by Maryland Senator Susan Lee and Terry Lierman who are putting together a second round of sign-ons.

Read more about Professor Gang Chen's case: https://bit.ly/APAJ_GangChen

USC Webinar, Dr. Chien-Shiung Wu, and Science Policy Review

On February 11, 2021, the USC US-China Institute will host a webinar on Scientific Espionage, Open Exchange, And American Competitiveness, featuring Professor Xiaoxing Xi of Temple University. Amid rapidly escalating tension between the United States and China, professors, scientists, and students of Chinese ethnic origin as well as those engaging in academic collaborations with China are under heightened scrutiny by the federal government. Law enforcement officials consider collaborating with Chinese colleagues “by definition conveying sensitive information to the Chinese.” Register and join the event here: <http://bit.ly/2YTbrOR>

According to [Science on February 5, 2021](#), a Chinese American physicist whose name many people have never heard will soon share a rare honor typically bestowed on the field’s mononymous greats: Einstein, Fermi, Feynman. On February 11, 2021, the International Day of Women and Girls in Science, the U.S. Postal Service will issue a stamp commemorating Dr. Chien-Shiung Wu. In 1956, the article explained, “Wu proved, essentially, that the universe knows its right hand from its left.” Dr. Wu, “who died in 1997 at age 84, never received a Nobel Prize for her demonstration of the effect called parity violation.” Instead, the article added, she “numbers among the women many scientists think were unfairly overlooked by the Nobel Committee.”

According to [Science on January 27, 2021](#), President Biden ordered sweeping review of government science integrity policies. A task force led by the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy was created to conduct a 120-day review of scientific integrity policies across the U.S. government, including documenting instances in which “improper political interference” interfered with research or led to the suppression or distortion of data. Gretchen Goldman of the Union of Concerned Scientists says the review offers “a huge chance to assess and learn from what went wrong under Trump.” Some science policy specialists say Congress should pass new laws to prevent political interference.

More ...

On February 3, 2021, [the Guardian](#) featured civil rights lawyers Vanita Gupta and Kristen Clarke who have been appointed as Associate Attorney General and Director of Civil Rights Division respectively in the Biden administration. According to the report, “even though civil rights groups will have allies in two top justice department positions, they do not expect change overnight.”

On February 5, 2021, Vox reported on [This Congress member wants Biden to hire more Asian Americans in government](#), including an interview with CAPAC Chair Rep. Judy Chu. “Unless they hear from us, we will remain invisible forever.” Earlier on January 27, 2021, USA Today reported on ['Insulting and frustrating': Community leaders decry lack of Asian Americans in Biden's top Cabinet picks](#). “It’s insulting and frustrating,” said Madalene Mielke, president and CEO of the Asian Pacific American Institute of Congressional Studies. The lack of top-level Asian American/Pacific Islander representation “makes us feel like we’re still on the menu, but not at the table,” said former California Rep. Michael Honda.

On February 6, 2021, the Washington Post reported on [Trump left behind a damaged government. Here's what Biden faces as he rebuilds it](#). For example, even after a round of hiring in the past year, the permanent staff of the Economic Research Service is down 33 percent from where it was near the end of the Obama administration, and the National Institute of Food and Agriculture workforce has declined 34 percent. “We lost some of the nation’s best economists and agricultural scientists in the previous administration.” The problems at the Agriculture Department are reflected across the government.

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