

Science, NAS, APS, and AAU Voice Their Concerns

On April 2, 2021, Science published an editorial "Reckoning with Asian America," which says in part: "Academia has not been immune to the effects of this history on institutional racism, bias, exclusion, and violence. COVID-19–related anti-Asian messages and harassment have been reported on college campuses across the country. Chinese American scientists have come under federal scrutiny for their associations with China under the 2018 China Initiative, which may jeopardize U.S.–Chinese scientific collaborations ... Violence and bigotry against Asian Americans have finally received national attention. We must make Asian Americans central to the country's discussions of race, and reckon with the history of Asian America." Read more at <https://bit.ly/2Oi7fXm>

On March 29, 2021, defense attorneys for Texas A&M University Professor Zhendong Cheng submitted a letter from [the Committee of Human Rights, National Academies of the Sciences, Engineering, and Medicines](#), in support of the defense's motion to revoke the detention order in his case and to release him pending trial to conditions that the court deems appropriate. Professor Cheng is identified as one of the "China Initiative" cases. He has been detained since August 2020 and has contracted COVID-19 during his time in the detention center. Read more about Professor Cheng's case at: http://bit.ly/APAJ_Zhendong_Cheng

On March 17, 2021, the American Physical Society wrote an open letter to Attorney General Merrick Garland concerning MIT Professor Gang Chen and possible broader implications for scientific and academic freedom within the United States. The allegations against Professor Chen "include descriptions of what appear to be normal activities and exchanges that occur within the global scientific community. The fact that similar charges against other scientists have subsequently been dropped without explanation adds to our concern," the letter said. "In addition to being troubled by the charges against Chen, APS members have expressed concern with what they perceive as scientists, particularly those of Chinese descent, being targeted for federal investigation for seemingly normal academic activities. The appearance of targeting academics who are from or who have collaborated with colleagues in China has racial overtones that deeply affect our community," the letter continued. The APS letter is available here: <https://bit.ly/3wfEdbO>

On March 29, 2021, Times Higher Education published [Scholars wary of Biden's opening salvo on foreign research ties](#). According to the report, "The anxiety centres on policy guidance for federal agencies that the Trump administration issued on its final day in office, which was intended to address university fears about its pursuit of scientists with connections to foreign governments. Rather than revisit that guidance and give universities a chance to offer input, Biden officials appear to have begun implementing it through agencies that include the National Institutes of Health." "In the new administration, they should have slowed it down, taken comments, reviewed it, before any implementation could go forward," said Tobin Smith, vice-president for policy at the Association of American Universities (AAU), which represents major research institutions. "That is not what appears to be happening." The article cited the high profile cases of Harvard University Professor Charles Lieber and MIT Professor Gang

Chen who are alleged for not fully listing all details in their known relationship with Chinese partners in standard disclosure forms. Read more at <https://bit.ly/2Pdadjp>

The label "China Initiative" by itself is as unacceptable as "China Virus."

Additional Actions on Anti-Asian Hate

On March 30, 2021, President Biden announced [additional actions to respond to anti-Asian violence, xenophobia and bias](#). The actions include reestablishing the White House Initiative on Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders, providing \$49.5 million to help AAPI survivors of domestic violence and sexual assault, creating a COVID-19 Equity Task Force Subcommittee on Structural Drivers of Health Inequity and Xenophobia, establishing a Department of Justice cross-agency initiative to address anti-Asian violence, launching new federally-funded resources to explore and celebrate the history and contributions of Asian Americans, and funding critical research to prevent and address bias and xenophobia against Asian Americans.

On March 30, 2021, Attorney General Merrick Garland announced [the launch of a 30-day review](#) to assess the government's tracking capabilities and prosecution of hate offenses that are surging across the country. In a memo released to Justice Department employees, AG Garland said the department would make hate crime prosecutions a priority and would provide additional help to local law enforcement agencies in their efforts to investigate bias crimes.

[Congressional Asian Pacific American Caucus](#) (CAPAC), [National Council of Asian Pacific Americans](#) (NCAPA), [Asian Pacific American Institute of Congressional Studies](#) (APAICS), [APIAVote](#), and other organizations issued statements commending the presidential actions.

Meanwhile, a 65-year-old Filipina American woman was punched and kicked in midtown Manhattan by an attacker who yelled an obscenity at her, according to a police official, and then said, "You don't belong here." According to [the New York Times](#), video footage from this and other recent anti-Asian attacks has often shown bystanders frozen in place, appearing paralyzed by the violence they were witnessing. Some Asian-Americans said the attack this week in Manhattan sent a chilling message: Even if assaulted on a busy street in broad daylight, they may be left to fend for themselves. A suspect was arrested on March 31, 2021.

On April 1, 2021, [CNBC reported](#) that "Nearly 1,000 Asian American chief executives and business leaders across the nation have pledged to donate \$10 million toward causes that support Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) communities amid a national outcry against anti-Asian violence."

Read more at <https://bit.ly/2KC7zuk>

Podcast on Racial Profiling

Asian American Unity Coalition (AAUC) hosted a podcast on March 28, 2021 titled "Racial Profiling: A threat to our Collective American Dream." It featured three speakers:

- Susan Lee, Maryland State Senator and Majority Whip
- George Varghese, Partner, WilmerHale representing MIT and former DOJ assistant attorney
- Mike German, Fellow, Brennan Center for Justice and former FBI agent

Audio recording for the podcast (50:54) is available at <https://bit.ly/31torMr>.

2020 Census Lawsuit Dropped

On March 31, 2021, civil rights organizations led by Asian Americans Advancing Justice | AAJC and the Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund dropped a lawsuit against the government over its 2020 Census plans, saying the Biden administration's actions have resolved the problems the suit sought to address. Read more at <https://wapo.st/3fzTKxp>

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