

2024/05/06 APA Justice Monthly Meeting

**APA Justice Meeting – Monday, 2024/05/06
1:55 pm Eastern Time / 10:55 am Pacific Time**

1. CAPAC Updates

Speaker: Nisha Ramachandran, Executive Director, Congressional Asian Pacific American Caucus, nisha.ramachandran@mail.house.gov

Nisha reported that May is Asian America, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander Heritage Month. This is also the 30th anniversary of the founding of CAPAC. There are many celebrations for the month. She looks forward to seeing many of us at various activities throughout the month.

Nisha also reported that the House will vote on what is called the Equal Representation Act by the end of the week. It is a census specific bill. It essentially seeks to add the citizenship question back onto the 2030 census and make apportionment calculations for House representation based on the number of citizens only.

CAPAC opposes this bill and is working with partners. Currently, there is no support from Democrats for this bill.

CAPAC has also been talking to many groups about the issues that matter to our communities. Profiling of Asian scientists and researchers, Chinese in particular, is a major issue of concern. Alien land bills is also emerging as a major issue.

CAPAC welcomes opportunities to talk about the AANHPI Heritage Month and discuss the top issues and concerns for our communities.

2. Anti-Profiling, Civil Rights & National Security Program - Asian Americans Advancing Justice | AAJC

Speaker: Joanna YangQing Derman, Director, Anti-Profiling, Civil Rights & National Security Program, Advancing Justice | AAJC

Joanna reported that the Reforming Intelligence and Securing America Act was signed into law, reauthorizing Section 702 of the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act. It did not include two of our priorities:

1. Requiring the government warrant requirement to search through Americans sensitive communications and
2. Closing the data broker loophole.

It was not the pursued policy outcome. However, Joanna highlighted that intervention by many AAPI group has achieved results and paves the way for the longer term, including very strong House and Senate champions on the issue and a clean reauthorization that was not included in a must-pass vehicle. Reauthorization will come up again in two years.

Joanna also reported that on Monday May 6, 2024, Asian Americans Advancing Justice – AAJC, along with their partners Relman Colfax, and Courtney Cunningham, filed a lawsuit against SB 264 in Florida on behalf of the National Fair Housing Alliance, the Asian Real Estate Association of America (AREAA), Housing Opportunities Projects for Excellence, and the Fair Housing Center of the Greater Palm Beach. Please see their [press release here](#), and the [NFHA press release here](#).

The lawsuit asserts that SB 264 violates the Federal Fair Housing Act, which prohibits acts that are motivated by a person's national origin or have disproportionate harmful effect on people from specific countries.

There will be more coming on this topic shortly via listservs, press releases, and social media announcements.

3. Update from Asian American Scholar Forum

Speaker: Gisela Perez Kusakawa, Executive Director, Asian American Scholar Forum (AASF), gpkusakawa@aasforum.org

Recognizing that May is AANHPI Heritage Month, Gisela called for the Asian American scholar community that has faced the brunt of so much racial profiling and targeting to celebrate what they have accomplished.

Gisela announced the launch of the Youth Ambassador for Science video competition to showcase the achievements of prominent Asian American scientists. It is important to create a narrative change that Asian American scholars are not perpetual foreigners. They are not threats to our country, but in fact have made significant fundamental contributions. AASF invites high schoolers to create and share short videos highlighting these scientists for a chance to win \$1,000 Visa gift cards. This competition will last throughout the AANHPI Heritage Month.

[The video competition was reported by the [APA Justice Newsletter Issue 253](#) on May 8, 2024.]

On May 22, AASF will host a joint event with the National Science Foundation (NSF) to highlight the Asian American scientists who have led with their innovations to the American society. Gisela thanks Dr. Rebecca Keiser at NSF, also a speaker at the monthly meeting, for helping to

initiate this diversity effort. Two of the scientists will speak at the event. This is a critical time as many of them are getting older.

Gisela noted that the algorithm used for video calls including Zoom was developed by an Asian American scientist.

During the past month, AASF spoke at the National Archives Museum to lift up Asian American history. It was a crucial discussion linking the historic injustices of Japanese American incarceration with modern day discrimination and profiling of Chinese Americans and immigrant scholars.

On May 22, AASF will also celebrate the AANHPI Heritage Month with Oak Ridge National Laboratory by exploring and teaching their employees on history such as the Chinese Exclusion Act and contemporary issues of anti-Asian hate crimes.

On May 29, AASF will host an event with the local Asian American lawyers associations on a reenactment featuring many cases under the China initiative, delving into personal experiences and legal narratives. Dr. Anming Hu will join this event, as will Dr. Gang Chen and others in future reenactments. This is part of AASF's effort to get their stories included into the legal curriculum.

4. A Forum with the Asian American and Academic Communities and the FBI in Houston

Speakers:

- Nabila Mansoor, President, Texas Multicultural Advocacy Coalition (TMAC)
- Kenneth M. Evans, Scholar in Science and Technology Policy, Baker Institute for Public Policy, Rice University

Nabila is Executive Director of Rise AAPI. She also serves as President of Texas Multicultural Advocacy Coalition (TMAC), a coalition of multicultural groups in Houston dedicated to promoting justice and progress for marginalized communities.

TMAC came together after the alien land laws were perpetuated across the country. The communities were able to stave off the alien land bills last year. Nabila is quite certain that it is going to come back in the next legislative session in 2025. The communities will gear up and make sure that they will not allow that bill to become law.

TMAC was formed under the auspices of Congressman Al Green in response to the alien land bill SB 147. The thought process behind it brought together marginalized and minority communities to mobilize and sustain continuing efforts.

Through the process, TMAC became a concerted effort to be up to date on issues across the board, including a unified effort against Texas SB4.

TMAC provides informational sessions to its communities.

Nabila announced that with the help of Professor Steven Pei who is a founding member, TMAC will co-host a forum with the Baker Institute and the Office of Innovation at Rice University on June 6. The event will take place at Rice University.

The title of the event is “A Dialogue Between the Academic and Asian American Communities with The FBI.”

This event will cover the pernicious profiling against academics and border issues, what we can do about it, what the current state of affairs is, and what we can look forward to.

Kelly Choi, Special Agent, and Gigi Pickering, Assistant Special Agent-In-Charge, both of them from the Houston FBI Field Office, will join Jill Murphy, Deputy Assistant Director for Counterintelligence at the FBI Headquarters in a panel at the forum. Doug Willaims, Jr., Special Agent-In-Charge of the Houston FBI Field Office will give closing remarks,

Also on the panel will be a good friend of the community and a prominent attorney in Houston – Gordon Quan who is with the Quan Law Group. He previously served in the Houston City Council and as Former Houston City Mayor Pro tem. He will be joined by David Donetti from the ACLU of Texas and Gisella Kusakawa at the Asian American Scholar Forum. Closing remarks will be given by Dr. Neal Lane, Senior Fellow in Science and Technology Policy at the Baker Institute for Public Policy of Rice University. Dr. Lane is also Former Director of the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy.

Dr. Sergio Lira, Vice President of TMAC and head of LULAC in Houston will be giving opening welcome remarks.

Dr. Kenny Evans gave a brief introduction of the Baker Institute as a nonpartisan, independent, academic think tank hosted on the Rice University campus.

Dr. Evans is a research scholar of the Science and Technology Policy Program, which was founded about 20 years ago by Dr. Neal Lane, who was a senior government official for many years in Washington with the National Science Foundation and OSTP.

Dr. Kirsten Matthews, who is a molecular biologist, runs the program as Director of the Science and Technology Policy Program.

The overarching goal of the program is to connect scientists with policymakers to be able to both advocate and let policy makers know the critical issues that scientists are facing in their labs. Increasingly the program is focusing on research security as there are many activities in Congress and the White House surrounding a new research security policy.

The Baker Institute is thrilled to partner with APA Justice and Rice University's Office of Innovation to host the forum that Nabila just announced for June 6. It will be a great event.

Dr. Evans described attending a Committee of 100 meeting shortly after the launch of the China Initiative. He was fresh out of graduate school. Several of his fellow graduate students in his lab had to complete their degrees overseas. They were Chinese, but he did not fully understand the rationale at that time.

The upcoming forum will be illuminating for both the seriousness and the perniciousness of this issue that is continued as Dr. Evans learned about the research security landscape. It is critically important that the dialogue between the FBI and the academic and Asian American communities continue.

Dr. Evans has a joint appointment with the Office of Innovation at Rice University. He works closely with Dr. Paul Cherukuri, Chief Innovation Officer, Vice President for Innovation, Rice University. Their focus is on how science can impact the community at large, including locally in Houston.

Both the Baker Institute and the Office of Innovation are excited about the upcoming forum between the academic/APA communities with the FBI that Professor Pei and APA Justice have helped to organize.

Dr. Evans also announced a related workshop that the Baker Institute will be hosting a Workshop to Develop the Future Direction of the National Science Foundation's Research on Research Security (RoRS) Program on May 23-24.

Dr. Rebecca Keiser will be giving the keynote at 8:30 am CT on May 23. It will be livestreamed. Additional information will be forthcoming.

5. Updates from the National Science Foundation

Speaker: Rebecca Lynn Spyke Keiser, Chief of Research Security Strategy and Policy, National Science Foundation

Commentator: Tam Dao, Assistant Vice President for Research Security, Office of Innovation at Rice University

- 2024/03/21 NSF: [Safeguarding the Research Enterprise](#)
- 2024 MacroPolo: [The Global AI Talent Tracker 2.0](#)
- 2024/04/05 Forbes opinion: [US Policy Undermines Talent Flows Amid Growing Competition With China](#)
- 2024/04/04 Brookings Institution: [US security and immigration policies threaten its AI leadership](#)
- 2024/03/14 Washington Post: [Chinese students, academics say they're facing extra scrutiny entering U.S.](#)

Dr. Rebecca Keiser is pleased to be engaged with the Baker Institute, APA Justice, and the broader community in dialogues about the challenges still facing the Asian American community. She also highlighted the positive aspects by collaborating with the Asian American Scholar Forum to recognize those who are largely unknown but have made significant contributions to science and technology, especially during this Asian Pacific American Heritage Month.

Under the Chips and Science Act and the Fiscal Year 2023 appropriations report, the National Science Foundation (NSF) was required to develop and examine a list of research areas that might have results in technologies or information that would be useful to the military of other countries.

NSF mostly funds fundamental research. It decided to take a broader look at the question on what assessment approach should be put in place to ensure that NSF will continue to maintain the openness of our research ecosystem while safeguarding needed security.

The JASON report on Safeguarding the Research Enterprise is an excellent report with recommendations emphasizing several important points.

First is how essential it is to have foreign born talent here in the United States and we have to continue to create an environment that is welcoming to the foreign talents and support system to encourage them to continue to come,

From a personal standpoint, Dr. Keiser has seen almost all of the research issues have been actions by those who are here in the U.S. To emphasize those who are from abroad is not accurate.

As the MacroPolo tracker indicates, top talents in AI are often foreign born. They stay and contribute, which NSF wants to continue.

This is also emphasized by the recent science and engineering indicator reports that come out of NFS.

There is a lot of data. The number of AI researchers who choose to either return to the People's Republic of China or do not come to the U.S. to study has also increased greatly. The National Academies and the Brookings Institution reports delve very well into the reasons why that is occurring.

We have real competition for talent internationally. Dr. Keiser emphasized that it is in our interest and an essential part of research security to make sure that we create a welcoming environment for international students here in the U.S.

On implementing the JASON report recommendations, NSF is in the process of developing an evaluation process, accepting the JASON report recommendation not to create lists, but instead on a project by project basis to assess the project, but not to create lists of people.

Each technology in each research area is so unique that NSF will look into an assessment method or rubric on trusted research in science and technology. The rubric will be released

publicly at the beginning, and the process will be transparent. When issues are found, NSF will engage with the research community.

With this approach to create and start a precedence of transparency, it will get to a point where NSF would approve funding the project, including the kind of mitigation approach that can be taken with the researcher as part of the project.

Transparency is one of the key aspects that the community has been asking for, which NSF also wants to embrace.

At this point, Dr. Tam Dao joined the discussion. He commented on the accomplishments of the Asian American community over the years during the Heritage Month.

Dr. Dao's parents came to the U.S. as refugees in 1975. He recalled their tough lives in the 1970s and 1980s in a convenience store pushing forward and trying to create a happy life for the family. He said we should also recognize those whose stories we do not hear.

Dr. Dao expanded on the workshop on research security that Rice University will be hosting on May 23-24. It aims to develop the future direction of the National Science Foundation's Research on Research Security (RoRS) Program.

Research security is a difficult and nebulous concept. Over time, it leads to perceptions of targeting and loss of trust in the government.

The vision of the NSF workshop is to address some of these questions. Rice University is hosting the workshop with a number of partners including the University of Houston, IPTalons, Inc., the Society of Research Administrators International, and NSF.

The virtual component of the workshop was completed the previous Friday with the goal of socializing a wide variety of participants across different disciplines attending the workshop and compiling a list of preliminary topics and themes of importance to the research security field.

According to Dr. Dao, that goal was accomplished as many ideas, new and existing, were put forward, including the mental health impact on Asian Americans.

As Dr. Evans indicated, the in-person workshop will be held on May 23-24 at the Baker Institute when scientists of different disciplines from cyber, epidemiology, to social sciences will bring in their skills, strengths, and application methods to get a better level of better understanding to the research security area.

Dr. Rebecca Keiser will give opening remarks, as will Dr. Peter Fisher, an author of the JASON report, in the May 23-24 workshop.

6. Q&A and Discussions