

History of the Association of Chinese Geneticists in America (ACGA)

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The Association of Chinese Geneticists in America (ACGA) is a non-profit (501C) organization formed by a group of American geneticists of Chinese ethnicity but its membership is open to individuals of all races and ethnicity. Incorporated in the State of Georgia in 1987, ACGA is supported by membership fees and donations. The Association facilitates the interaction between the American genetics community and their colleagues in mainland China, Taiwan, Hong Kong and Singapore.

ACGA members include researchers and other professionals who work primarily in molecular and biochemical genetics, cytogenetics, plant and animal genetics, developmental biology, human genetics, population genetics, clinical genetics and genetic counseling. They come from academic, research, clinical and industrial organizations. With more than 500 members, ACGA expects to continue to grow along with the rapidly expanding field of genetics and genomics. Genetic researchers and clinicians are encouraged to participate, contribute, and become a vital part of the community.

The organization is guided by by-laws and governed by an executive office headed by the President and under the supervision of a Board of Directors elected from active members (for details, <http://www.chinesegeneticists.org/>). Dr. Andrew T. Chen, retired from the U.S Center for Disease Control, served as the founding president. Former presidents include Professor Lillian Y. Hsu (1988) (retired), Professor Yuet-Wai Kan (1989) (University of California, San Francisco), Professor Savio LC Woo (1990) (Mount Sinai School of Medicine), Professor Lap-Chee Tsui (1991) (Hong Kong University), Professor Harold Chen (1992) (Louisiana State University), Professor Teresa Yang-Feng (1993) (Yale University), Professor Paul Wong (1994) (Rush Medical School), Professor Fa-Ten Kao (1995) (University of Colorado Medical Center, retired), Professor Yuen-Tsong Chen (1996) (Academia Sinica, Taipei), Professor Ethylin Wang Jabs (1997) (Mount Sinai School of Medicine), Professor Chi-Chyang Lin (1998) (Chung Shan Medical University), Professor Shi-Han Chen (1999) (retired), Professor Chris Yun Fai Lau (2000) (University of California, San Francisco), Professor Nancy Wang (2001) (University of Rochester), Professor Yuen Kai Fung (2002)

(University of California at Los Angeles), Professor Jin-Xiong She (2003) (Medical College of Georgia), Professor Wai-Yee Chan (2004) (The Chinese University of Hong Kong), Professor Zhong Chen (2005) (University of Utah), Professor Jin Li (2006) (Fudan University), Professor Bai-Lin Wu (2007) (Harvard Medical School), Professor Min-Xin Guan (2008) (Zhejiang University), Professor Yao-Shan Fan (2009) (University of Miami Medical Center), Professor Stephen TS Lam (2010) (Hong Kong Department of Health), Professor Hongyu Zhao (2011) (Yale University). The current president is Professor Huanming Yang (2012-2013) (BGI, the largest genomics organization in the world). Election of officers and annual meeting are held every year during the annual meeting of the American Society of Human Genetics (**Figure 1**).



Figure 1. Current and former presidents and board of directors in the 2012 annual meeting: left to right--Wai-Yee Chan, Chris Yun Fai Lau, Stephen TS Lam, Lydia P. Chen (Andrew's wife), Andrew T Chen, Hongyu Zhao, Min-Xin Guan, Harold Chen, Bai-Lin Wu, and Huanming Yang.

With the initial support from Professor Yuet-Wai Kan (UCSF, President in 1989) as well as continuous support from Softgenetics Inc (<http://www.softgenetics.com/>) and BGI (<http://bgiamericas.com/>) in recent years, ACGA has established ACGA Trainee Awards. Each year based on the abstracts submitted to the annual meeting of the American Society of Human Genetics, the ACGA Award Committee, consisting of ACGA members with the expertise in human and medical genetics as well laboratory genetic testing, will select four categories of trainee awards, which include

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Predoctoral Basic Science, Predoctoral Translational Science, Postdoctoral Basic Science, and Postdoctoral Translational Science. These awards provided a unique opportunity for these outstanding trainees to interact with their Chinese peers in human and medical genetics, and encouraged these awardees to further develop and establish their careers in human and medical genetics. Indeed many of them have gone on to have excellent careers in human and medical genetics. To further enhance the impact of ACGA on next-generation Chinese human and medical geneticists, ACGA is establishing a mentor program, which will provide extensive opportunities for the trainees to interact with and learn from their peers in ACGA. The goal of this mentor program is to facilitate and promote the career development of outstanding trainees in human and medical genetics, which will ultimately strengthen ACGA and enhance its impact.

In recent years, ACGA has co-organized several international conferences with other organizations. These include the International Conference on Medical Genetics (2004) co-organized with the Peking University School of Basic Medical Science and the Chinese Society of Medical Genetics; the International Symposium of Genomic Medicine (2005) co-organized with Fudan University; the International Congress of Global Chinese Geneticists (2006) co-organized with Peking University Center of Medical Genetics; the ACGA-Hong Kong International Conference on Genetic and

Genomic Medicine (2008) and a satellite meeting in Wenzhou; and the ACGA-Taiwan International Genetics meeting (2010). In 2012, the Association collaborated with Zhejiang University to present the first Global Chinese Geneticists Conference (GCGC) in Hangzhou.

Many ACGA members have made significant contributions in basic and clinical genetics and played a leading role in genetic education, research and services in USA, Canada, Hong Kong, Taiwan and China. The core mission of ACGA is to foster and cultivate close cooperation and networking between American and Chinese geneticists with the goal of supporting and advancing development of current and future global geneticists. Every year, we continue to strengthen relationships among Chinese geneticists globally, promote scientific collaborations, and provide social assistance to our members and Chinese geneticists worldwide. Any persons who work in the field of genetics or related field and who are residing in the United States of America are encouraged to join the association. Also, those who reside outside of US, i.e. China, Taiwan, Hong Kong and Singapore will be welcomed to be a member. The ACGA will bring into close contact among Chinese investigators in the field of genetics, promote and encourage collaboration, and promote and facilitate the career development of future Chinese geneticists. We look forward to your continued interest and participation in the Association.