

Informational meeting held to garner support for Ding Jiayi, political detainee in China and husband of alumna Sophie Luo

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Ding Jiayi

ALFRED, NY – More than 100 people gathered Monday in Holmes Auditorium on the Alfred University campus in support of alumna Shengchun “Sophie” Luo ’03 M.S., whose husband, Ding Jiayi, was taken into custody in China in December and is being held at an undisclosed location, unable to communicate with his wife in Alfred or his two daughters.

Speaking to the Holmes auditorium audience, Luo described her husband’s involvement in the New Citizens’ Movement in China, which seeks to expand civil rights for Chinese citizens and move the country’s government toward a democratization.

[Video from Monday’s informational meeting on Ding Jiayi](#)

A lawyer, Ding was arrested in 2014 and sentenced to 3 ½ years during a government crackdown on political dissent. His recent arrest followed a political meeting he attended in the southeastern city of Xiamen. His lawyer in China, Peng Jian, has reported Chinese authorities have prevented him from meeting with his client, and should Ding be convicted — he reportedly has been charged with incitement of subversion — he could face 15 years in jail.

In the aftermath of her husband’s arrest on Dec. 26, Luo took to social media and, with the help of friends, has been rallying support for her husband. At the Alfred University assembly Monday evening, students, faculty and administrators signed petitions seeking assistance from U.S. Senators Chuck Schumer and Kristin Gillibrand.

In addition, Professor of English Rob Reginio, who served as emcee at the assembly, said the University has been in contact with the office of Congressman Tom Reed. Reginio said Reed has said he will do what he can to support Ding and his family.

Reginio said that he had recently learned Amnesty International has agreed to use its influence to investigate the Ding arrest and assist the political prisoner.

According to Luo, her husband has been placed under a Residential Surveillance at a Designated Location, or RSDL – a euphemism for secret detention at a facility in which prisoners may be subjected to torture.

Luo earned a master’s degree in ceramic engineering from Alfred University in 2013.