

Charlene Cho

2005-2006 AAAS Fellow at the National Institutes of Health Office of the Director

Currently a first-year student at Vanderbilt Law School in Nashville, TN

During fellowship placement week in April 2005, Charlene Cho borrowed a laptop from another AAAS Fellowship finalist to research an unfamiliar term. Charlene and the owner of the laptop, Greg Davis, struck up a friendship that continued when they returned to Chicago, where they were both living, to await the start of the fellowship year.

In September, Charlene assumed her role as a AAAS Fellow in the Office of the Director at the National Institutes of Health, and Greg began his fellowship at the Office of Resource Analysis in the U.S. Department of Defense (DoD). They were married in December 2005.

Charlene had developed an interest in science policy during her doctoral studies at the University of Chicago. After reading an article on the patenting of biological material, she became intrigued by the concept of patenting genes and its implications for the progress of biomedical science.

After receiving her PhD in 2004, she decided to explore this interest further by serving as a post-doctoral fellow at the University of Illinois at Chicago, where she studied how patenting in biomedical research affects the willingness of scientists to share data and materials. She also served as a Christine Mirzayan Science & Technology Policy Graduate Fellow at the National Academies.

As a AAAS Fellow, Charlene represented the Office of the Director at NIH-wide working groups, including one on Genome-Wide Association Studies and another on intellectual property (IP), for which she conducted research for the IP Availability and Standards Committee. She also drafted briefing documents and communications materials that the director of NIH used to present to various audiences, including members of the NIH intramural community, advocacy groups, and scientific and professional organizations. In addition, she launched the AAAS Fellows' IP reading group.

Charlene is now pursuing her goal of becoming an IP patent attorney. Greg is serving as an adjunct research staff member for DoD's Institute for Defense Analyses. They plan to return to Washington in summer 2007, so that Charlene can pursue an internship at the Department of Justice. Charlene and Greg are expecting their first child in August 2007.

