

# Wayland professor sworn in as U.S. citizen

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PLAINVIEW—While political candidates debate immigration, one Chinese immigrant and Wayland Baptist University professor looks forward to casting her vote in the general election this year, after becoming a U.S. citizen.

Yahui Zhang, associate professor of communication and media studies, took the oath of citizenship in Fort Worth Feb. 25.

When she returned to her office in Wayland's School of Fine Arts on the Plainview campus, she discovered co-workers and students had decorated it with streamers, balloons and small U.S. flags.

"This is my adopted country," Zhang said. "Personally, to me, although there are a lot of realities that we still have to work with, the American ideals are just so high and lofty that I strongly identify with them. That is one of the most important reasons that I decided to become a naturalized citizen."

Zhang, originally from Xi'an, China, moved to the United States 14 years ago to pursue an education.

"I taught English when I was in China," she said. "My husband and I knew that the best universities are in the United States. He, and myself, really wanted me to get the highest degree. That's why we came to the United States. This is the land of opportunity."

Zhang began the naturalization process last October and completed her final interview Feb. 20.

She hopes to register as a voter in time to participate in the general election.

“This will be my first time exercising my right and responsibility as a citizen,” she said.

Even though the campaigns are heating up, she is not intimidated by the nature of American politics.

“It is polarized,” she said of the political situation. “But it’s still a democratic election process, and we have to be grateful for that.”