Oral Presentation O8.4

BUILDING A CASE FOR HUMAN RIGHTS ADVOCACY: THE GUANGCHENG CHEN CASE

Elizabeth Liubicich, Kelsey "Rae" Brattin, and William Munro*
Political Science Department, Illinois Wesleyan University

A group of students and faculty members at Illinois Wesleyan University have undertaken an advocacy project in cooperation with Scholars at Risk, an institution dedicated to "promoting academic freedom and defending the human rights of scholars worldwide."[1] Illinois Wesleyan's chosen scholar is Guangcheng Chen, a self-educated, Chinese human rights lawyer. Chen received national recognition after his publication of a 2005 report detailing forced abortions and sterilizations in the Shandong Province of China. Chen was subsequently arrested for organizing a mob to disrupt traffic, charges of suspicious legitimacy, and is now detained in house arrest even after the completion of his formal sentence. The aim of Illinois Wesleyan's project is to bring attention to the violations of human rights toward Chen and his family while advocating for a national stance against his unlawful detention. This presentation will include our findings on the background and timeline of Chen's specific charges, trial, and incarceration and the violations of human rights we believe were committed in each of these areas. Also included will be examples of our research methods and challenges of finding authoritative sources, the use of international and legal instruments to build an advocacy case for Chen. Discussion of our allies at Scholars at Risk, Human Rights in China, and Dui Hua will be included along with the progress and direction Illinois Wesleyan intends for the project to take.

[1] Scholars at Risk Network. Web. 23 Mar. 2012. <http://scholarsatrisk.nyu.edu/>.