

## Michelle Lee Still at the PTO, but status unconfirmed

As reported in Politico, "USPTO press secretary Paul Fucito tells [Politico] that [PTO Director Michelle K.] Lee has been signing [patent] certificates since Inauguration Day. That function by law is handled by the director, but Fucito declined to clarify Lee's status at the agency."

Lee Move to a Different Agency? Rep. Darrell Issa is quoted by Politico as saying that he "expect[s] that her being held over allows for an orderly transition should they find another place for her in the administration[.]"

The complete Politico report is included with the PDF version of this note.

Regards,

Hal

Li Zhou, *USPTO Intrigue Thickens*, Politico (Febr. 14, 2017):

While there's still no official announcement that Michelle Lee will stay on as USPTO director, she's the one who is signing patent certificates — and it looks like things could stay that way for awhile, Nancy and Ashley report. USPTO press secretary Paul Fucito tells Nancy that Lee has been signing the certificates since since Inauguration Day. That function by law is handled by the director, but Fucito declined to clarify Lee's status at the agency.

Issa clarifies things (sort of): Rep. Darrell Issa (R-Calif.), who had previously announced Lee would be sticking around in the Trump administration, gave Ashley an update on Monday, saying that how long Lee stays on at USPTO depends on a few things. "I've worked with her, I'm delighted that she's been held over, and I would expect that her being held over allows for an orderly transition should they find another place for her in the administration," he said.

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But he hinted that a potential new gig for her in the administration may not be in overseeing patents. Other places in the administration where Lee could possibly be of service, Issa says, include in trade negotiations, with her knowledge of intellectual property and the tech community, or at the Office of Science and Technology Policy.

"The first step was to have her held over so that she wouldn't return to a lucrative job in her old industry," he said, a nod to her Google pedigree. "The second step is to recognize that at some point there will be a transition from the undersecretary of Commerce to another position, hopefully, but at this point, she's doing her job, she's signing patents ... and that's what's important." Issa added