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Lawyers in California 2016

LITIGATION

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SPECIALTY: CRISIS MANAGEMENT, WHITE COLLAR DEFENSE, SPORTS

In March, Yang won summary judgment for client University of Southern California and its public safety chief in a civil rights lawsuit brought by seven former students. The plaintiffs had sued USC and the Los Angeles Police Department in federal court in 2014 over an alleged pattern and practice of false reporting and excessive police responses to minority student parties.

“At a time when you have racial polarization across the country, you have plaintiffs hoping to piggyback on strong public feeling,” Yang said. “I was lead attorney. Their demand was high — the plaintiffs’ counsel had sent us some insane number, eight or nine million dollars. I said I think we’re going to be gone before that happens.”

She was right. After getting most of the claims dismissed at the pleading stage, Yang moved for summary judgment. She said she contended that the complaint was insufficiently pled regarding the precise role of the campus officers. U.S. Magistrate Judge Paul L. Abrams of Los Angeles agreed, finding there was no triable issue regarding any pattern or custom of USC officers violating the civil rights of minority students.

The plaintiffs’ remaining claims against

the Los Angeles police were tried to a jury in June, resulting in findings of excessive force, battery and arrest without probable cause. In August, the city settled for \$450,000 before a trial on damages could be held. *Vinson v. City of Los Angeles*, 14-cv-04488 (C.D. Cal., filed July 7, 2014).

For online daily fantasy sports client DraftKings Inc., Yang has overseen the defense and provided strategic counseling for an onslaught of challenges related to data security and internet gaming. “We are coordinating all state and federal governmental inquiries into DraftKings’ practices,” she said. The official inquiries largely followed public reporting about a DraftKings employee allegedly exploiting nonpublic customer and financial information to play on other fantasy sports websites. Gibson Dunn also acts as lead counsel representing the company in dozens of potential class actions alleging illegal conduct that have been consolidated in multidistrict litigation in federal court in Massachusetts. *In Re: Daily Fantasy Sports Litigation*, MDL 2677 (J.P.M.L., consolidated Feb. 4, 2016).

The DraftKings case is one of several in which Yang leads in her firm’s crisis man-



agement practice. “My job is to interface with government regulators and provide oversight and strategy,” she said. “I don’t necessarily participate down in the weeds. I insure that the positions we are taking are harmonized.”

— John Roemer