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Huajian Gao received his B.S. degree from Xian Jiaotong University of China in 1982, and his M.S. and Ph.D. degrees in Engineering Science from Harvard University in 1984 and 1988, respectively. He served on the faculty of Stanford University between 1988 and 2002, where he was promoted to Associate Professor with tenure in 1994 and to Full Professor in 2000. He served as a Director at the Max Planck Institute for Metals Research between 2001 and 2006 before joining the Faculty of Brown University in 2006. At present, he is the Walter H. Annenberg Professor of Engineering at Brown.

Professor Gao’s research is focused on the understanding of basic principles that control mechanical properties and behaviors of materials in both engineering and biological systems. He is a Member of the National Academy of Engineering and a co-editor-in-chief of the Journal of the Mechanics and Physics of Solids, the flagship journal of his field. He is also the recipient of numerous academic honors, from a John Simon Guggenheim Fellowship in 1995 to recent honors including the Rodney Hill Prize in Solid Mechanics from the International Union of Theoretical and Applied Mechanics in 2012, and the William Prager Medal from the Society of Engineering Science and the Nadai Medal from the American Society of Mechanical Engineering in 2015.