

In This Issue #94

- Faculty Nationwide Calls for Attorney General Garland to End The "China Initiative"
- Stanford, Princeton, APS, and Federation Representatives Took Action on "China Initiative"
- Trial of Kansas University Professor Franklin Tao To Begin on December 6, 2021
- Events and Developments for the Asian American and Scientific Communities

Faculty Nationwide Calls for Attorney General Garland to End The "China Initiative"

On November 3, 2021, a coalition of **841** faculty members, scholars, and administrators from **202** universities and educational institutions across all **50** states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico sent [an open letter](#) to Attorney General Merrick Garland, calling for the termination of the "China Initiative." They joined 579 colleagues from University of California Berkeley, Temple University, and Princeton University who endorsed [the initial letter](#) sent by 177 Stanford University faculty members, including 8 Nobel laureates, on September 8, 2021.

"The ill-conceived 'China Initiative' continues historical discrimination with current xenophobic targeting of Asian American scientists as 'perpetual foreigners.' It is wasteful of taxpayers' dollars, ineffective in addressing the national security concerns, and counter-productive to U.S. global leadership in science and technology," said Jeremy Wu, Co-organizer of the APA Justice Task Force which is leading this nationwide effort.

"I hope the Department of Justice will end the China Initiative that has harmed the United States, particularly with its impact on our nation's leadership in university-based fundamental research and education. As these letters demonstrate, the harm is widely recognized," said Peter Michelson, Senior Associate Dean for the Natural Sciences and Professor of Physics and Luke Blossom Professor in the School of Humanities and Sciences, Stanford University and one of the organizers of the Stanford letter.

"It is often necessary to compromise between the shining ideals we cherish and the exigencies of a complex real world. However, the China Initiative not only threatens the principles of freedom and openness that we cherish as central to our way of life, it does so in a self-destructive fashion, placing at risk the invaluable benefits we reap from welcoming into our Universities the most brilliant and accomplished scholars from China and from around the world," said Steven Alan Kivelson, Prabhu Goel Family Professor of Physics of Stanford University and another organizer of the Stanford letter.

"The China Initiative's very name opens it up to concerns about racial profiling, and its record of investigating and criminally prosecuting researchers for administrative and/or unintentional errors has instilled significant fear among researchers and students of Chinese origin. I am

immensely heartened that so many of my academic colleagues stepped up to support Chinese and Chinese-American researchers by signing this letter.” said Andrea J. Liu, Hepburn Professor of Physics, University of Pennsylvania and Past Speaker of the American Physical Society.

"The Society of Chinese Bioscientists in America (SCBA) is the largest professional organization for bioscientists of Chinese descent in North America. We have benefited from the opportunity, diversity, equity, and inclusion that the United States has offered. However, we have also been troubled by the series of events in recent years targeting Chinese American scientists, including some of our own members, under the 'China Initiative.' In 2019, we published an article in the *Science* magazine titled "[Racial Profiling Harms Science](#)" to voice our concerns. It is our hope that continued efforts such as the open letter will be an important step forward leading to corrective actions." said Hui Zheng, Professor and Director Huffington Center on Aging, Baylor College of Medicine, and President of SCBA.

APA Justice will keep the campaign open with the sign-on form at <https://bit.ly/EndorseStanfordLetter>. Please continue to urge all qualified endorsers to sign on until the "China Initiative" has ended. As of November 7, 2021, a total of **1,747** faculty members, scholars, and administrators from over **210** universities and educational institutions across the nation have endorsed the Stanford letter. Check the latest updates at the [End The "China Initiative"](#) web page.

End The "China Initiative"

Days Since "China Initiative" was launched
1102
DAYS

TickCounter Count Up Plugin

Status Update - As of 11/07/2021, 11:00 AM Eastern Time

Endorsers of Stanford Letter

- Stanford University: **177**
- University of California Berkeley: **214**
- Temple University: **167**
- Princeton University: **198**
- APA Justice campaign: **991**

Total: **1,747**

Number of Institutions

- Stanford University: **1**
- University of California Berkeley: **1**
- Temple University: **1**
- Princeton University: **1**
- APA Justice campaign: **211**

Number of States/Territories

- States: **50**
- District of Columbia
- Puerto Rico

Change.org Supporters: **237**

Endorser Count by Institution

Institution	Endorser Count
Stanford University	177
University of California Berkeley	214
Temple University	167
Princeton University	198
APA Justice campaign	991

Comments by Endorsers

- 1. I signed because I have been a fan of the letter since it was first published.
- 2. I signed because I am a fan of the letter.
- 3. I signed because I am a fan of the letter.
- 4. I signed because I am a fan of the letter.
- 5. I signed because I am a fan of the letter.
- 6. I signed because I am a fan of the letter.
- 7. I signed because I am a fan of the letter.
- 8. I signed because I am a fan of the letter.
- 9. I signed because I am a fan of the letter.
- 10. I signed because I am a fan of the letter.

Stanford, Princeton, APS, and Federation Representatives Took Action on "China Initiative"

During the APA Justice monthly meeting on November 1, 2021, Peter Michelson, Senior Associate Dean for the Natural Sciences, Stanford University, explained that the Stanford Letter called for the termination of the "China Initiative" and gave three reasons. One was the apparent racial profiling occurring under the "China Initiative." The other reasons had to do with the harm the "China Initiative" was doing to the United States' research enterprise. Peter believed that that harm would still need to be addressed even if the "China Initiative" were to be terminated. The "China Initiative" had the net effect of discouraging legitimate, open, and beneficial collaboration with institutions in China. Peter's reason for signing the letter and helping to draft it was a growing realization that fear was influencing the actions and behavior of ethnically Chinese colleagues at Stanford. Peter believed that this was wrong and uncalled for, and thought that virtually everybody who signed the Stanford Letter would agree with that sentiment. Read the Stanford letter here: <https://bit.ly/3tD4Gzt>

During the same meeting, Princeton University Professor Kai Li discussed another letter, drafted by six Princeton faculty members, in support of the Stanford Letter. The six faculty members were later assisted by several other faculty members who helped modify the draft to also comment on events that occurred after the Stanford Letter was sent. These events included the acquittal of Dr. Anming Hu and the dismissal of Dr. Qing Wang's case and five other cases. Princeton faculty pointed out the need for more university faculty members to be educated about the Department of Justice's targeting of scientists of Asian descent under the "China Initiative." This federal initiative encourages unfounded prosecutions in a way that compromises American values of freedom and equality and that brings back memories of the McCarthy era. Princeton held a Zoom panel discussion on the Stanford Letter and "China Initiative." The Princeton letter had 198 signatures, representing 20% of the faculty at Princeton. Kai thought that Princeton might serve as an example that if a lot of faculty members knew about the "China initiative," and what the Department of Justice has been doing in terms of wrongly prosecuting people, they would support the letter from our Stanford colleagues and call for an end to the "China Initiative." Read the Princeton letter here: <https://bit.ly/3AXw6C6>

During the same meeting, Mark Elsesser, Director of Government Affairs at the American Physical Society (APS), began by stating that APS stands firmly against the unfair treatment of students and scientists based on national or ethnic origin. It is antithetical to the Society's values, and should not be tolerated. This particular principle was restated in an APS board statement that was released in the spring of 2020. While the APS agrees that the federal government should be concerned with attempts by foreign entities to illicitly acquire US-based research and technology, they believe that the current approach that the federal government is taking to address these concerns is not appropriate. It is actually weakening and not strengthening US scientific enterprise for a number of reasons that Peter laid out earlier. The government may have a goal of "being tough on China." But they are destroying the lives of targeted scientists and academics. With that in mind, in early September APS President Jim Gates sent a letter to Attorney General Merrick Garland and to OSTP director Eric Lander, expressing the Society's concerns with the DOJ "China Initiative" and outlining a series of recommendations to reformulate it to make it more effective. In this letter APS asked that the

Initiative be refocused on cases where there are evident economic and national security risks, not on issues of administrative non-disclosure. Read the APS letter here: <https://bit.ly/3i3EpWq>

During the same meeting, Ron Yang, Professor, University at Albany, the State University of New York, reported that 13 Asian American and Chinese American university organizations jointly drafted a letter that was sent to the White House on November 1, 2021. The beginning of this action was marked by fear and uncertainty, given the “forceful enforcement of law” on innocent scientists. Representatives of the organizations focused on writing the letter to President Biden since the end of summer. The letter was sent to the White House with the help of AAJC, addressing the broader political environment in which the "China Initiative" was created. Asian Americans and Chinese Americans have made significant contributions to this country. In the 21st century Chinese Americans and immigrant scholars and scientists also constitute a major driving force behind emerging fields, such as artificial intelligence, bioengineering, biomedical research, climate change, cybersecurity, data analysis, nanotechnology, and renewable energy. This was something the authors of the letter wanted lawmakers and the public to be aware of. The letter ended with a message to policymakers: China’s fast ascent into a global economic and technological power has created new geopolitical tensions with, challenges to, as well as opportunities for our country. However, policymakers should always keep in mind that our greatest asset in this long race is the innovative power fueled by the world’s most comprehensive higher education system and unparalleled academic freedom. The authors strongly believed that an academic climate promoting open international collaborations and an educational environment welcoming diversified and talented international students remain the pillars of success for maintaining our nation’s global lead in science and technology. <https://bit.ly/3kqfYWV>

Trial of Kansas University Professor Franklin Tao To Begin on December 6

Kansas University Professor Franklin Tao was the first academic to be indicted under the "China Initiative" in August 2019. During the APA Justice monthly meeting on November 1, 2021, attorney Peter Zeidenberg reported that the trial of Professor Tao will begin in Kansas City, Kansas, on December 6, 2021. There were lengthy motion hearings a couple of weeks ago in Kansas, where Franklin Tao’s legal team alleged a variety of serious government misconduct by the FBI in connection with Professor Tao’s case.

The original trial date was set for October 25. However, three days **after** Professor Tao’s trial was supposedly set to begin, he and his legal team received [a formal Classified Information Procedures Act \(CIPA\) notice](#) filed by the government, indicating that there was classified material collected in connection with Professor Tao’s investigation. This is the type of information which is normally disclosed to the defense at the very outset of a case – not after 26 months and just a few weeks before trial.

Advancing Justice | AAJC and OCA are organizing national and local concerned community members to attend the trial and show support to Professor Tao. You can sign up here: <https://bit.ly/turnoutKS>.

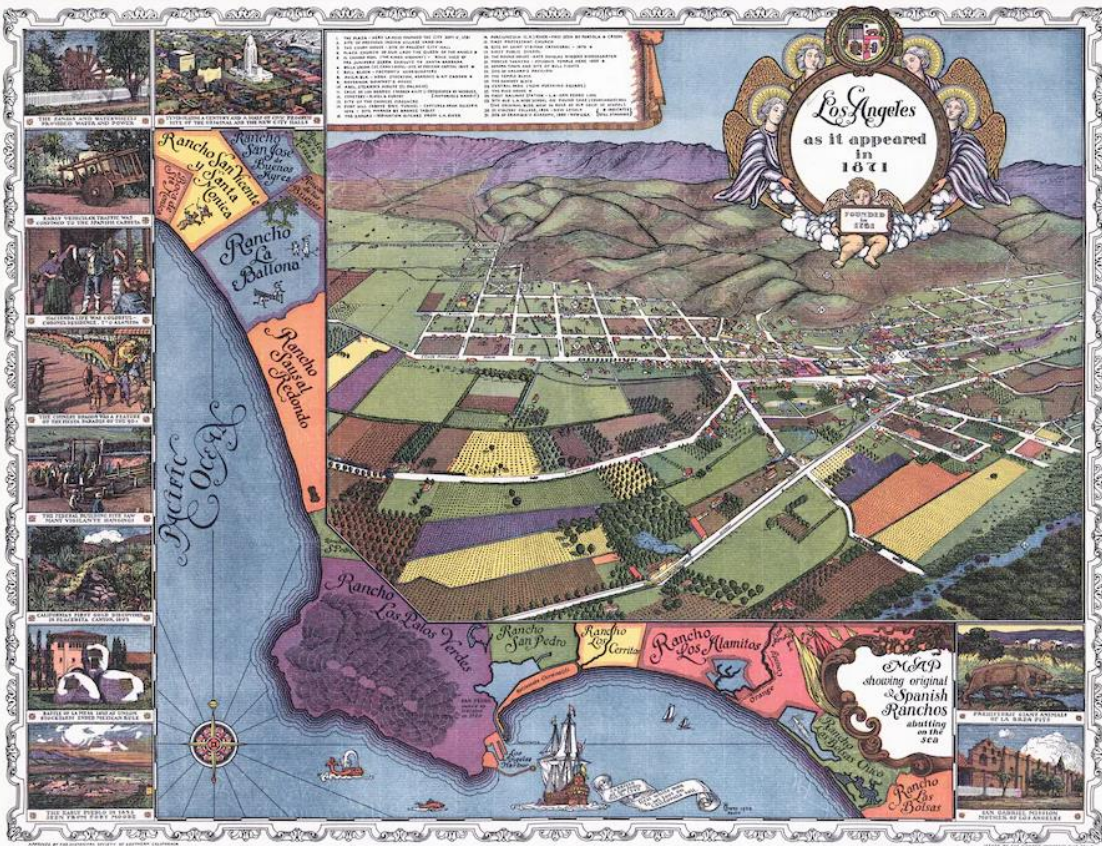
APA Justice has invited Mr. Haipei Shue, President of United Chinese Americans, to provide a live on-the-ground report in the December 6 APA Justice monthly meeting. Read more about the Franklin Tao case here: <https://bit.ly/3fZWJvK>

Events and Developments for the Asian American and Scientific Communities

- **Crackdown on Academic Collaboration with China Harms American Science.** At the [School of Physics Colloquium](#) hosted by the Georgia Institute of Technology on November 1, 2021, Temple University Professor Xiaoxing Xi gave a presentation on the topic of "Crackdown on Academic Collaboration with China Harms American Science." Academic collaboration with China was once encouraged by the US government and universities. As tension between the two countries rises rapidly, those who did, especially scientists of Chinese descent, are under heightened scrutiny by the federal government. Law enforcement officials consider collaborating with Chinese colleagues "by definition conveying sensitive information to the Chinese." In 2015, Professor Xi became a casualty of this campaign despite being innocent. "China Initiative" established by the Justice Department in 2018 has resulted in numerous prosecutions of university professors for alleged failure to disclose China ties. In this talk, Professor Xi argues that academic decoupling is not in America's interest. It is a tall order to convince the public and policy makers of this fact, but the scientific community must try lest the American leadership in science and technology will be irreparably damaged. Watch the video here: <https://bit.ly/GeorgiaTech110121> (42:43)
- **Webinar on Movement to Combat Racial Profiling of Asian Americans: Where Are We Now?** On November 3, 2021, Advancing Justice | AAJC and OCA - Asian Pacific Americans co-hosted a two-part panel with the first section providing a comprehensive overview of the anti-racial profiling movement and the current state of play, including the end of the U.S. Department of Commerce's security unit Investigations and Threat Management Service (ITMS) and the upcoming trial of Dr. Feng 'Franklin' Tao, the most recent case under the "China Initiative." The latter half of the panel looks into ways you can be involved with Advancing Justice | AAJC's and OCA's week of action. Speakers highlight important policy and advocacy priorities, community-led grassroots organizing efforts, and outline how to build narratives with the media to lift up the voices of impacted people and increase public awareness. Watch the video here: <https://bit.ly/3qesGJq> (1:16:26)
- **Boston, Cincinnati, and Seattle Have New Asian American Mayors.** Michelle Wu, Aftab Pureval, and Bruce Harrell were elected to serve as mayor for these three major cities. Experts say the wave reflects the emergence of a generation of Asian Americans, who are largely children of immigrants, better poised than their predecessors to become agents in the political process, as well as proof that the stereotype of Asian Americans as lacking the necessary leadership qualities has begun to dissolve. NBC

News describes what made it possible with the country's changing political landscape: <https://nbcnews.to/3GWOyyW>

- **First Person of Color Confirmed as Next Census Bureau Director.** On November 4, 2021, Robert Santos, a third-generation Mexican American, was confirmed as the next U.S. Census Bureau director, becoming the first person of color to lead the nation's largest statistical agency on a permanent basis. Read more: <https://bit.ly/3BRNUit>
- **Los Angeles Apologizes for Past Atrocities Against Chinese Americans.** On October 24, 1871, a mob of White and Hispanic Angelenos rampaged through the Chinese quarter of the city, burning buildings and attacking residents. When the dust settled, 17 Chinese men had been lynched in a fit of racist violence that presaged the coming Chinese exclusion laws and pogroms across the American West to drive out remaining Chinese residents. It was one of the largest mass lynchings in the history of the United States. On the 150th anniversary of the event, Los Angeles Mayor Eric Garcetti apologized for the mass lynching of Chinese Angelenos and pledged to get a memorial built to the victims even after he leaves office. Read more: <https://wapo.st/2ZFWdkw>



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