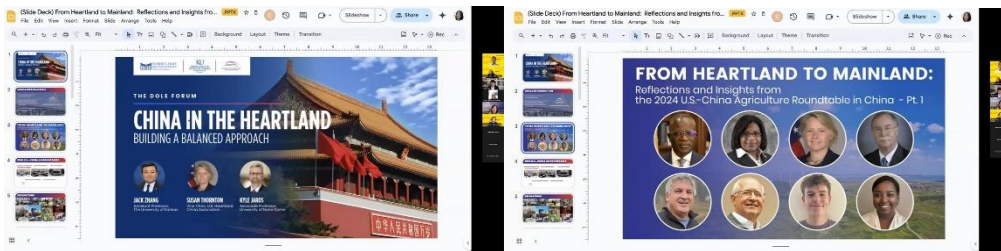


In This Issue #289

- Update from US Heartland China Association
- "China in the Heartland: Building a Balanced Approach" and the Case of Professor Franklin Tao
- KSNT News: Professor Franklin Tao Speaks Out
- Pandas are Here at the National Zoo in Washington DC
- News and Activities for the Communities

Update from US Heartland China Association



Min Fan, Executive Director of the U.S. Heartland China Association, introduced USHCA to us at the February 2024 monthly meeting.

Min Fan warmly invited meeting participants to join an upcoming hybrid event "China in the Heartland: Building a Balanced Approach" at the University of Kansas (KU) in Lawrence, Kansas. Former KU Professor Franklin Tao and his wife Hong Peng plan to attend and engage in discussions.

This event has been in planning for over a year. It involved collaboration with local Chinese American scholars and the National Committee for U.S.-China Relations to ensure a meaningful exchange on pertinent topics. The emphasis is on fostering local engagement and informed debate around broader issues affecting the community.

Min underscored the importance of having discussions about U.S.-China relations not just in Washington, D.C., but also in the Heartland. The U.S. Heartland China Association, a bipartisan organization founded by late Senator **Adlai Stevenson III** of Illinois originally under the name of Midwest U.S. China Association and currently chaired by Former Governor of Missouri **Bob Holden**, aims to promote stable U.S.-China relations to protect and advance the interests of the Heartland community, such as export market for our agricultural producers, global competitiveness of our businesses, talent attraction in our universities, and the cultural heritage of Chinese Americans In the Heartland.

During this past summer, USHCA organized an agricultural delegation to China, which included members from rural areas who had never visited the country before. One delegate from Kentucky returned with a renewed perspective, expressing to his local trade association members and elected officials that China was nothing like the all-negative portrayals in the media. This experience illustrated the potential benefits of people-to-people exchanges in fostering better relations and understanding between the two nations. ([From Heartland to Mainland, reflections and insights](#), webinar replay)

The trip was 100% funded by US Agriculture stakeholders.

Min, who is the first Chinese American executive director of the organization, highlighted the scrutiny faced by Chinese Americans in leadership roles within nonprofits focused on U.S.-China relations. She is one of very few Chinese Americans leading a non-profit organization on U.S.-China relations.

USHCA also faced political backlash and accusations of undue influence after sending a bipartisan delegation of six Heartland mayors to China ([Press Release](#), [Video recap](#)). Despite the challenges, the organization continues to work closely with the State Department and other agencies to promote sub-national diplomacy and collaborative efforts around pressing issues like climate change.

Min highlighted an upcoming event in Memphis, which aims to engage local partners, NGOs, and academics in a [Yangtze-Mississippi Regional Dialogue](#) about climate resilience, low carbon agriculture, and green transportation. This initiative seeks to promote balanced discussions in the Heartland, inviting broader community involvement and partnerships. The goal is to engage diverse local stakeholders in more informed conversations about U.S.-China relations and the future of Chinese Americans in this region.

In closing, Min expressed gratitude for the opportunity to share insights with the broader community and emphasized the importance of ensuring that diverse voices are heard in discussions that shape the future. She called for continued collaboration and support to facilitate these critical dialogues and foster understanding among all stakeholders involved.

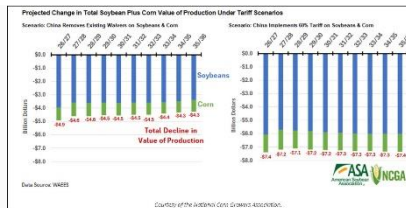
A summary of the October 7 monthly meeting, including Min's update, is posted at <https://bit.ly/48wdg7D>.

Farm Policy News: New US-China Trade War Could Cost Farmers Billions

fp Farm Policy News

New US-China Trade War Could Cost Farmers Billions

October 17, 2024 Ryan Hanrahan trade



According to *Farm Policy News* on October 17, 2024, United States corn and soybean farmers could lose billions of dollars in annual production value if the US-China trade war induced new tariffs on agriculture products. The study found that “U.S. soybean farmers (could) lose an average of \$3.6 to \$5.9 billion in annual production value” while “U.S. corn farmers (could) lose an average of \$0.9 to \$1.4 billion in annual production value” depending on how China would respond to increased U.S. tariffs.

“This burden is not limited to the U.S. soybean and corn farmers who lose market share and production value. There is a ripple impact across the U.S., particularly in rural economies where farmers live, purchase inputs, utilize farm and personal services, and purchase household goods,” the study said. **The total economic contribution of soybean and corn production could drop between \$4.9 billion and \$7.9 billion annually**, with the most heavily affected sectors including manufacturing and mining of crop protection, fertilizer products, and energy products, as well as real estate and transportation.

Read the *Farm Policy News* report: <https://bit.ly/4eR0yT8>

"China in the Heartland: Building a Balanced Approach" and the Case of Professor Franklin Tao



China in the Heartland: Building a Balanced Approach



China in the Heartland: Building a Balanced Approach

On October 11, 2024, Professor **Jack Zhang** of the University of Kansas (KU) Department of Political Science, joined by **Susan Thornton**, Vice Chair of the U.S. Heartland China Association (USHCA), and a retired senior U.S. diplomat with decades of experience in Eurasia and East Asia, and **Kyle Jaros**, an associate professor at the University of Notre Dame, for a discussion on building a balanced approach for relations with China. The event was hosted by USHCA and the Robert J. Dole Institute of Politics at KU.

Kyle Jaros began by discussing the surge in China-related legislation and other state-level policy actions, which increased to at least 110 or 115 between 2016 and 2023. Probably 25 to 30% of these proposals have been enacted into law. What started out as a handful of tangible concerns has morphed into something that is far more ominous in the minds of many.

When asked about the China policies of the Trump and Biden administrations, Susan Thornton stated that one of the key challenges in U.S.-China negotiations is the political divide within the U.S. in Washington. It has often been politically advantageous for lawmakers to exaggerate or promote dramatic, threatening proposals to get attention. While the federal government generally takes a balanced approach in assessing the China threat, politicians have put a lot more emphasis on some aspects of the so-called China threat than are warranted.

This overemphasis on the perceived threat from China could lead to unintended consequences, as highlighted by Jack Zhang. Many legislators, both at the national and subnational levels, may not realize that the bills they are drafting and voting on could have adverse effects. One major concern is the effort to revive the China initiative in Congress. The China Initiative was a Department of Justice program that tried to combat espionage and technology theft on university campuses and industry. There is a lot of evidence that the FBI racially profiled Chinese and Asian American researchers, damaged and ruined a lot of careers.

During the Q&A session, **Hong Peng** reminded the audience that her husband, **Franklin Tao** was a KU professor who was wrongly prosecuted by the China Initiative . After five years of hard fighting by the Taos, the Tenth Circuit Court acquitted the last charge against Franklin on July 11 this year. Justice finally prevailed and Franklin was fully exonerated. The victory was bittersweet for the couple. This fight has cost Franklin nearly everything; the wrongful prosecution destroyed his career that he spent over 20 years building and spending almost 16 hours a day each day working in his lab. The total cost of his legal defense is over 2.3 million.

They used up all their savings. They took money out of their retirement accounts, borrowed money from every single friend who could help, and they raised funds through GoFundMe. And currently, they still have over a million in debt.

Hong Peng said “We can't choose where we were born and where we came from. But we really should not be scapegoated because of our country of origin. Twenty years ago, we came to the United States to pursue our American dream. We never imagined we would spend five years trapped in this nightmare.”

Despite all this, Franklin Tao remained fully occupied, fully dedicated to his scientific work. He has published over 30 papers during those five years. And a few days ago, he had one of his papers accepted by *Science*. Unfortunately, even until today, he is still fighting to reinstate his faculty position. Hong wondered how the community could help a victim like Franklin to rebuild his career.

Kyle Jaros commented that an idea very well worth considering: a kind of amnesty for anybody who was found in violation of minor academic regulations, for example, disclosure of foreign

research relationships which was a widespread issue across academia.

Compliance and information about compliance was something that academics were not being regularly informed of for a long period of time. And then suddenly there was a huge frame shift. And within a few years, universities very quickly started to ramp up attention to these rules, and then law enforcement got involved and decided to make criminal cases or even kind of national security cases out of what in many instances were very minor. Kyle Jaros hoped that Franklin Tao can make progress in restitution.

Susan Thornton thanked Franklin Tao for seeing the whole process through to the end and the acquittal. It is important for our justice system, for our institutions, for our faith in our institutions, which she thinks is coming under a lot of fire in this country and around the world. "I think we owe you a debt of gratitude on that score. We've seen periods of overzealousness of this type in U.S. history before, and then we always must come back and reflect on our errors. More publicity, more shining a light, as you've done tonight by standing up and telling your story, is what we need for people to be aware of," she said. "I hope that this very difficult ordeal can somehow have some kind of silver lining or benefit both for you and your family because you deserve it, but also the contribution that you make to our institutional fabric."

Watch the video: <https://bit.ly/3UhjmT7> (1:19:06). Read the Franklin Tao story: <https://bit.ly/3y8SBsm>.

Ken Lao contributed to this report.

KSNT News: Professor Franklin Tao Speaks Out



On October 20 2024, *KSNT News Inside Kansas Politics* featured former Kansas University Professor **Franklin Tao**, his wife **Hong Peng**, and **Ron Barrett-Gonzalez**, KSAAUP (Kansas Conference of American Association of University Professors) Committee A Co-Chair. The interview discussed Professor Tao's legal battle after being wrongfully accused of Chinese espionage under the Trump administration's China initiative. His conviction was overturned by a U.S. appeals court in July 2024. Tao shares his journey, including his academic background and the distressing circumstances surrounding his arrest.

Professor Tao's wife, Hong Peng, described the emotional toll the situation took on their family, highlighting the fear and desperation they faced. The couple endured significant financial

damage. Her testimonies revealed the emotional toll the situation has taken on her family, with children experiencing significant distress.

Professor Barrett-Gonzalez expressed deep concern over the university's handling of Professor Tao's case. He recalled the horror felt within the academic community when it was revealed that a specific ethnicity of researchers, particularly those of Asian descent, were being disproportionately targeted by the federal initiative. After Professor Tao was acquitted, Professors Barrett-Gonzalez and Rob Catlett, also KSAAUP Committee A Co-Chair, and other faculty members expected the KU administration to promptly reinstate him, recognizing the importance of justice and fairness in academia. However, to their disappointment, the administration opted not to take action, which Professor Barrett-Gonzalez argued is unfairly prolonging the distress for Professor Tao and his family.

Professor Barrett-Gonzalez referenced similar cases where universities acted appropriately after faculty were acquitted. For example, Professor **Anming Hu** in Tennessee facing similar accusations was reinstated following a court ruling, as the university recognized the negative impact on its reputation. In contrast, Professor Barrett-Gonzalez criticized KU for failing to follow suit and reinstate Professor Tao.

The discussions between Professors Barrett-Gonzalez and Catlett and university officials centered around what they considered clear violations of civil rights laws, particularly the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which prohibits discrimination based on nationality or ethnic origin. They highlighted how the 10th Circuit Court has recognized tenure as a property right, arguing that the university's actions have violated Professor Tao's Fifth Amendment rights by not providing due process in his dismissal. Professor Barrett-Gonzalez asserted that this treatment reflects a broader ethical failure on the part of the university administration.

In closing, Professor Tao underscored his continued dedication to research despite challenges, arguing that he has been wrongfully persecuted and calling for his immediate reinstatement to help restore the university's reputation. The segment concludes with a commitment to continue advocating for justice and fairness in the academic environment.

Watch the *KSNT News* report: <https://bit.ly/3YyWeSV> (27:57). Professors Barrett-Gonzalez and Catlett spoke at the August 2024 APA Justice monthly meeting, a summary of which is posted here: <https://bit.ly/3AHFSO1>

Pandas are Here at the National Zoo in Washington DC



Bao Li, left, and Qing Bao. The giant pandas will stay at the National Zoo. (Roshan Patel/Smithsonian's National Zoo & Conservation Biology Institute)

According to [Washington Post](#), [CNN](#), and multiple media reports, two giant pandas, Bao Li and Qing Bao, both three years old, arrived at the National Zoo in Washington DC on October 15, 2024, after an absence of almost a year. They travelled on a specially chartered FedEx Boeing 777 cargo jet dubbed the “Panda Express.” They are here on a 10-year lease, and will make their public debut January 24, 2025, after a quarantine period.

While born in Sichuan, Bao Li has deep familial roots in Washington. His mother, Bao Bao, was born a celebrity at the National Zoo in 2013 and returned to China four years later. His grandparents, Meixiang and Tian Tian, lived at the zoo for 23 years until their lease ended last year.

“Panda Diplomacy” began with US President **Richard Nixon**’s ice-breaking trip to Communist China during the Cold War. In June, the San Diego Zoo also received two giant pandas from China, which marked the first panda loans to the U.S. in two decades. On the same day Bao Li and Qing Bao arrived in Washington, On line livestream of "giant panda cam" from the San Diego Zoo was launched at <https://bit.ly/4eRBVWu>

News and Activities for the Communities

1. APA Justice Community Calendar

APA Justice Public Events

Today: **Wednesday, October 23**

Thursday, October 24
4:30pm Why Do Legislators Travel? Lawmaking, Fall Fighting and Messaging in Taiwan

Friday, October 25
Celebrating the 20th Anniversary of the American Studies Network

Saturday, October 26
Celebrating the 20th Anniversary of the American Studies Network
Common Ground and Banquet

Sunday, October 27
Celebrating the 20th Anniversary of the American Studies Network
9:00pm Rep. Gene Wu's Town Hall meeting

Sunday, November 3
9:00pm Rep. Gene Wu's Town Hall meeting

Wednesday, November 6
6:00pm Asian American Women in Media and Music

Sunday, November 10
9:00pm Rep. Gene Wu's Town Hall meeting

Tuesday, November 12
4:20pm Threats to International Engagement and Academic Freedom

Thursday, November 14
6:00pm An Advice and Networking Event (Financial Services, Investing and Consulting)

Friday, November 15
AAASG Inaugural Annual Summit
9:00am Triangle-Wisconsin Regional Dialogue

Events shown in this zone: **Eastern Time - New York**

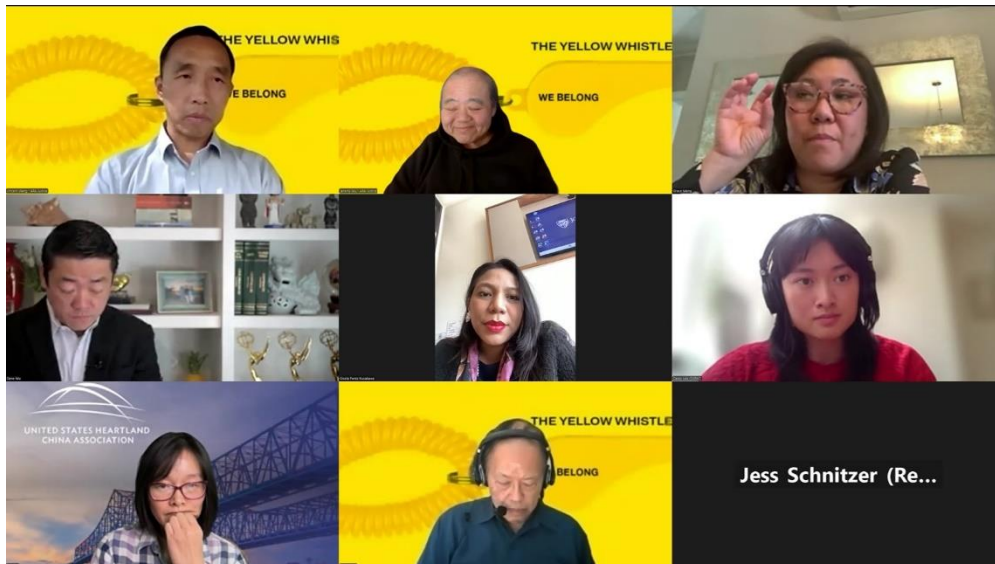
Upcoming Events:

2024/10/24 Why Do Legislators Brawl? Lawmaking, Fist Fighting and Messaging in Taiwan
2024/10/25-27 Celebrating the 20th Anniversary of the American Studies Network
2024/10/26 Common Ground and Banquet
2024/10/27 Rep. Gene Wu's Town Hall Meeting
2024/11/03 Rep. Gene Wu's Town Hall Meeting
2024/11/06 Asian American Women in Media and Music
2024/11/10 Rep. Gene Wu's Town Hall Meeting
2024/11/12 Threats to International Engagement and Academic Freedom
2024/11/14 An Advice and Networking Event (Financial Services, Investing and Consulting)
2024/11/15 AAASE Inaugural Annual Summit
2024/11/15 Yangtze-Mississippi Regional Dialogue

Visit <https://bit.ly/3XD61qV> for event details.

NOTE: Because the regular scheduled day falls on the eve of Election Day, we have moved the next APA Justice monthly meeting to Monday, November 18, 2024. The virtual monthly meeting is by invitation only. It is closed to the press. If you wish to join, either one time or for future meetings, please contact one of the co-organizers of APA Justice - **Steven Pei** 白先慎, **Vincent Wang** 王文奎, and **Jeremy Wu** 胡善庆 - or send a message to contact@apajustice.org.

2. Summary of October 2024 Monthly Meeting Posted



The October 2024 APA Justice monthly meeting summary has been posted at <https://bit.ly/3BMUjB2>. We thank the following special speakers for their reports and updates:

- Congresswoman **Grace Meng** gave her remarks that were covered in Newsletter #288 on October 21, 2024: <https://bit.ly/4070ryi>
- **Casey Lee**, Policy Director of Congressional Asian Pacific American Caucus (CAPAC), provided an update on CAPAC on behalf of Nisha Ramachandran, Executive Director of CAPAC. She thanked Congresswoman **Grace Meng** and her team for leading efforts to prevent the reinstatement of the China Initiative in the FY 2025 appropriations bill. CAPAC remains committed to ensuring the AAPI community's voice is heard in key legislative processes, including the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA). Casey highlighted a recently released video featuring firsthand accounts of the racial profiling and wrongful prosecutions caused by the China Initiative, encouraging its wide distribution to raise awareness. She also acknowledged the collaboration with advocacy groups like AASF, AAJC, and CAA, emphasizing their role in shaping ongoing legislative negotiations to protect the community.
- **Gisela Kusakawa**, Executive Director of Asian American Forum (AASF), expressed gratitude to Congresswoman **Grace Meng** for her leadership in opposing the reinstatement of the China Initiative and supporting the Museum of Asian Pacific American History. She highlighted AASF's success in gathering over 1,000 participants for its award ceremony, celebrating Asian American scholars, and emphasized AASF's role in policy efforts and the museum's establishment. Gisela also thanked **Casey Lee** and CAPAC for educating the public during "China Week," where scholars shared personal stories of facing discrimination. She praised AASF's advocacy in recognizing civil rights icons and connecting university faculty with policymakers, urging continued community engagement to ensure Asian American voices are heard in shaping national policy. Gisela also mentioned AASF's collaboration with the NIH on transparency efforts and reiterated the importance of the community's involvement in policy discussions.
- **Min Fan**, Executive Director of the U.S. Heartland China Association (USHCA), gave a report that is covered by today's newsletter.
- Texas State Representative **Gene Wu** gave a report that was covered in Newsletter #288 on October 21, 2024: <https://bit.ly/4070ryi>

Read the October APA Justice monthly meeting summary: <https://bit.ly/48wdg7D>. Read previous monthly meeting summaries: <https://bit.ly/3kxkqxP>

3. China and World Institute at Johns Hopkins University is Hiring

	<p>Job Req ID: 115047</p> <p>Managing Director, China & World Institute</p> <p>Johns Hopkins is seeking a <i>Managing Director, China & The World Institute</i> to play a pivotal role in the launch and growth of the new China and the World Institute at SAIS. The mission of the Institute is to bring greater rigor and reason to public and policy discussions on China, spearheading efforts to generate new knowledge and strategic insights to "get China right." Working closely with and reporting to the Inaugural Faculty Director, the Managing Director leads the strategic development, management, and advancement of the Institute, playing a critical role in building a leading center for interdisciplinary research, education, and public engagement on China's role in the world.</p> <p>The Managing Director must be energetic and capable of effectively managing and tracking small to large-scale projects and events involving a diverse group of internal and external researchers, experts, and practitioners. Candidate must demonstrate ability to proactively identify and improve projects and processes with a growth mindset. This individual will be a vital member of a fast-paced multidisciplinary hub of professionals and will manage all institute research and programmatic priorities from big picture to task levels.</p>
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Johns Hopkins University is seeking a Managing Director, China & The World Institute to play a pivotal role in the launch and growth of the new China and the World Institute at School of Advanced International Studies (SAIS). The mission of the Institute is to bring greater rigor and reason to public and policy discussions on China, spearheading efforts to generate new knowledge and strategic insights to “get China right.” Working closely with and reporting to the inaugural Faculty Director, the Managing Director leads the strategic development, management, and advancement of the Institute, playing a critical role in building a leading center for interdisciplinary research, education, and public engagement on China's role in the world. It is also hiring an Academic Program Manager. Read more about these opportunities at <https://bit.ly/40kgtES>

4. APA Justice Newsletter Web Page Moved to New Website

Newsletters

APA Justice began publishing a free periodic newsletter about 4-7 times a month in July 2020. You can subscribe [here](#). Visit the [Virtual Library](#) to search the entire collection.

Filter by year
All



The screenshot shows a grid of four newsletter thumbnails. Each thumbnail includes a title, a date, and a 'Read' button. The thumbnails are: 1) '#280 Xenophobic Legislation; 9/9 Meeting; Mixed Enrollment; USSTA; AA History in States; +' dated September 17, 2021. 2) '#279 Briefing to Oppose China Initiative Bill; AASF Forum with NIH; Xiaoxing Xi interview;' dated September 16, 2021. 3) '#278 9/9 Monthly Meeting; Harmful Anti-China Rhetoric; NASEM Report; War for Chinese Talent' dated September 9, 2021. 4) '#277 Passing of Dr. Jane Wu; Anti-Asian Laws; Rock Springs; White House Initiative Meets; +' dated September 3, 2021.

As part of its continuing migration to a new website under construction, we have moved the Newsletter webpage to <https://www.apajusticetaskforce.org/newsletters>. Content of the existing website will remain, but it will no longer be updated. We value your feedback about the new webpage. Please send your comments to contact@apajustice.org.

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