

2025/07/07 APA Justice Monthly Meeting

APA Justice Meeting – Monday, 2025/07/07
1:55 pm Eastern Time / 10:55 am Pacific Time

1. CAPAC Updates

Speaker: Judith Teruya, Executive Director, Congressional Asian Pacific American Caucus. Judith.Teruya@mail.house.gov

[not on record]

2. Update from Asian Americans Advancing Justice | AAJC

Speaker: Joanna YangQing Derman, Director, Anti-Profilting, Civil Rights & National Security Program, Advancing Justice | AAJC jderman@advancingjustice-aaajc.org

Without going into the details of Texas Senate Bill SB17, Joanna highlighted several other top-line actions from AAJC.

On July 2nd, AAJC transmitted a bipartisan letter from AAPI leaders to members of Congress, urging broader protection for the safety of the AAPI community. It was signed by senior former government and elected officials, as well as community and public service leaders. (Please contact Joanna if you would like a copy of the letter.)

AAJC, along with the Asian American Scholars Forum (AASF), Chinese for Affirmative Action (CAA), and Stop AAPI Hate, also led a coalition letter representing 64 organizations addressed to Secretary Marco Rubio. His newly proposed visa policy—issued without meaningful clarity—harms the safety and well-being of students, undermines American values, and jeopardizes the nation's academic, technological, and economic leadership. The letter called for a halt to the implementation of the May 28th policy announcement to “aggressively revoke the visas of Chinese international students,” including those in “critical fields.”

There have also been several Supreme Court decisions in recent weeks. AAJC, along with the Washington Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights and Urban Affairs and OCA, condemned the recent Supreme Court ruling in *Trump v. Casa*, which significantly limits the ability of lower courts to issue "universal injunctions". Executive Order 14160, which seeks to end birthright citizenship for individuals born in the United States whose parents had certain immigration

statuses, may now go into effect on a case-by-case basis. AAJC remains confident that related litigation will result in the Executive Order being unconstitutional. AAJC has also issued press statements on other Supreme Court decisions, which can be found on the AAJC website.

3. Update from Asian American Scholar Forum

Speaker: Gisela Perez Kusakawa, Executive Director, Asian American Scholar Forum (AASF)

Gisela provided an update on AASF's key activities and legislative monitoring efforts. She reported that [the estate of Dr. Jane Wu recently filed a complaint](#) regarding Northwestern University's treatment of her during and after a baseless investigation. Tragically, Dr. Wu took her own life, and her family is now seeking justice. AASF is working to uplift her story and raise awareness about the mental health struggles that many Asian American scholars, scientists, and professors face in today's climate. For those interested in learning more, please contact Gisela directly.

In addition to recent State Department announcements regarding visas for Chinese students, there have also been changes in the Student and Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS) records, along with broader issues affecting not only the Asian American community but Americans more generally—from birthright citizenship to renewed efforts around denaturalization. AASF remains committed to the educational aspect of this work and will be distributing fact sheets to help Asian American scholars, scientists, and researchers clearly understand what directly impacts them.

From July 25 to July 27, AASF will host the [Pioneer Symposium and Medal Ceremony](#) to celebrate the accomplishments of our community. AASF is honored to welcome several notable figures for the fireside chats, including Secretary Condoleezza Rice, the 66th U.S. Secretary of State, and Jensen Huang, the founder and CEO of Nvidia. They will also be joined by several Nobel Laureates.

The Friday and Saturday sessions will highlight the tremendous accomplishments and contributions of Asian Americans to the U.S. research enterprise. This is a critical part of AASF's educational mission. For example, how many people know about Dr. David Ho, a groundbreaking figure in HIV treatment who helped save the lives of individuals like Magic Johnson? These are important American stories that deserve to be told and celebrated. On Sunday, the symposium will take a deep dive into the topic of research security in the United States. How can we address legitimate national security concerns while also upholding humanitarian values and academic freedom? It will be an excellent opportunity to hear from leaders like Dr. Rice, Dean Arun Majumdar, and many others on potential paths forward.

4. Introduction to Paul Cheung

Speaker: Paul Cheung 鄭文耀, President, Committee of 100

Paul offered introductory remarks outlining his professional background and vision for the organization. With over two decades of experience in journalism and philanthropy, Cheung previously led digital innovation at the Associated Press and the Miami Herald, and later focused on technology-driven equity initiatives at the Knight Foundation. He emphasized that his career has been defined by building strategic partnerships and using technology to dismantle systemic barriers—whether in journalism, misinformation, or civil rights.

Paul sees strong alignment between C100's mission and that of APA Justice and other advocacy organizations. In his view, defending AAPI rights requires more than passion—it demands strategy, cross-sector collaboration, and coordinated action. Reflecting on his past work covering civil rights and leading foundation programs, he stressed that legal victories alone are not enough unless they are paired with cultural and public narrative change. For C100, that means not only amplifying partners' work but also helping to shift the broader conversation about Chinese American identity and inclusion.

Acknowledging the evolving U.S.–China relationship, Paul pointed out that geopolitical tensions between the two countries will likely persist, regardless of administration. These tensions have direct consequences for Chinese Americans and other immigrant communities. As a result, C100 is rethinking how it approaches its advocacy—not simply by sharing how policy changes impact Asian Americans, but by demonstrating how they affect all Americans. He called for renewed efforts to uplift Chinese American contributions to U.S. history—from birthright citizenship to building the transcontinental railroad—as essential to understanding what is at stake if these communities are sidelined.

Looking ahead, Paul emphasized C100's commitment to working collaboratively with partners to inform, shape, and advance impactful policy change. He pointed to the State of Chinese Americans research as a resource designed to empower coalition partners with data-driven insights that support collective advocacy. Underscoring the importance of relationship-building, Paul expressed a strong interest in connecting individually with APA Justice participants to learn more about their work, identify shared goals, and explore opportunities for meaningful collaboration.

5. Introduction of American Association of Colleges and Universities

Speaker: Lynn Pasquerella, President of the American Association of Colleges and Universities (AAC&U)

- AAC&U website: <https://www.aacu.org/>
- AAC&U: [A Call for Constructive Engagement](#)

President Lynn Pasquerella expressed deep concern about the future of American higher education and democracy. She pointed out that this is a moment of enormous significance that brings a renewed sense of urgency to our nation's historic mission of educating for democracy. It is also a time of growing moral distress, in which campus leaders feel coerced into making decisions they believe are unethical decisions they feel they have no choice but to make. They are continually forced to confront the question: *How much individual injustice should be tolerated for the sake of long-term reform?*

As a result, for many, that moral distress has morphed into a kind of moral injury—arising from the continuous erosion of their moral compass and the ongoing challenges to their deeply held values characterized by deepening ideological divides.

Development of Existential Threat to Higher Education

2023 brought attacks on DEI, a Supreme Court decision banning race-based admissions, and legislation introduced in 42 states to implement educational gag orders—limiting speech around race, gender, and other so-called “divisive concepts.”

At the end of that year, the presidents of Harvard, MIT, and Penn were called before the Congressional Committee on Education and the Workforce to answer for and atone for alleged antisemitism on their campuses—accusations attributed to their institutions' emphasis on DEI. At the December 5th hearings on Capitol Hill, [Representative Virginia Foxx's opening statement](#) was not only against those university presidents, but against higher education as a whole. Those hearings foreshadowed the first 100 days of President Trump's second term, marked by unprecedented government overreach and political intrusion into nearly every aspect of college and university operations. This included the withdrawal of billions of dollars in federal research funding, caps on indirect costs for grants awarded by NIH and the Department of Energy, and the elimination of spending on research topics like race, transgender health, women's issues, climate change, misinformation, and COVID-19.

Within his first two and a half weeks in office, four executive orders were signed directly targeting transgender individuals. And within another two weeks, a Dear Colleague letter from the Department of Education directed colleges and universities to eliminate all DEI initiatives in hiring, curriculum, and co-curricular activities. A separate executive order mandated that higher education accrediting bodies remove all DEI-related standards, claiming that “radical left” accreditors had allowed campuses to be overrun by “Marxist maniacs and lunatics.”

Targeting of Chinese and International Students

We saw hundreds of international students detained and thousands more have their visas terminated. Limits were removed on ICE agents' activities on college campuses. In states like Florida, campus security officers were given authority to perform immigration enforcement functions.

Despite First Amendment protections, the President threatened the arrest and deportation of international students and faculty who participated in pro-Palestinian protests. Funding for study abroad and international scholarships was suspended. Harvard was warned that its ability to admit international students would be revoked unless it provided detailed records on all such students. Although Harvard complied, a month later Secretary Kristi Noem declared that international students would no longer be eligible for admission to Harvard, and existing international students were told they must transfer immediately or face visa termination. Travel bans were implemented for citizens of 12 countries, and heightened visa restrictions were placed on those from seven others. On June 9th, the government announced that all student visa applicants—regardless of country of origin—must unlock their social media accounts for review. One consequence of this has been that colleges and universities with high international student populations now face credit risk. Moody's has warned of downgrades to credit ratings—particularly for the 11% of American institutions where international students make up more than 20% of the student body.

The reemerging climate of fear and intimidation for Chinese students—echoes of the 77 cases brought by the Department of Justice under the "China Initiative." Although most cases were dismissed due to lack of evidence, the chilling effect on Chinese and Asian American researchers remains. During the program's enforcement, departures of Asian researchers from the U.S. increased by 75%. Although the initiative ended in 2022, recent attempts to revive it have reaffirmed a deep sense of uncertainty among Asian and Asian American students. Efforts led by Senator Marco Rubio and others, which many see as the weaponization of a population that has contributed significantly to the nation's economic development and academic excellence by bringing in global talent and diverse perspectives. During the last academic year, 200,398 Chinese students were studying in the U.S.—122,778 of them graduate students in STEM fields. These are the very students now being targeted.

What has unfolded constitutes an existential threat to American colleges and universities—institutions founded on the principles of the free exchange of ideas, the unfettered pursuit of truth, and independence from unwarranted governmental and political interference.

Call to Action

In April 2025, AAC&U, alongside the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, released a statement entitled *A Call for Constructive Engagement*, outlining what is at stake for America's prosperity should the critical partnership between government and higher education continue to unravel. For the first time, sitting presidents of colleges and universities came together in large numbers to respond to attacks from the Trump administration. The statement made clear that while presidents and leaders of scholarly societies are open to constructive reform and do not

oppose legitimate government oversight, they will stand together against efforts to restrict or undermine the freedoms fundamental to American higher education.

The process leading to the statement revealed the pressures campus leaders are experiencing. We held two virtual meetings where 193 campus leaders came together. Many spoke of needing board approval to speak out, others described pressure from state governors, and many feared media backlash. Yet nearly all cited growing demands from faculty and students to defend their institutions' core principles and push back against efforts to control curriculum or restrict freedom of expression.

We know from the recent removal of the President of the University of Virginia that concern over government overreach is real. That incident reaffirmed a conviction that emerged: *If everyone exercises a little moral courage, no one person has to be the hero.* This is a moment for all of us to come together across sectors and lead with moral courage.

When one university is threatened, it is the responsibility of all institutions to respond. As philosopher John Dewey reminds us—democracy is not just a system of government, but a way of life. It depends on an educated and engaged citizenry, capable of making independent judgments, challenging authority, and participating meaningfully in public discourse.

6. Update from the American Association of Universities

Speaker: Toby Smith, Senior Vice President for Government Relations and Public Policy, American Association of Universities

- [Association of American Universities v. National Science Foundation \(1:25-cv-11231\)](#)
- [Association of American Universities v. Department of Health & Human Services \(1:25-cv-10346\)](#)
- [Association of American Universities v. Department of Energy \(1:25-cv-10912\)](#)

Toby pointed out AAU priorities haven't changed dramatically but the volume and nature of the challenges have evolved.

Research Funding and Student Aid Cuts

The most recent development is the Reconciliation Bill. AAU remains concerned about several of its implications, particularly regarding student aid. We saw reductions, including the cancellation of the Grad PLUS loan program and new caps on student loan amounts. While AAU successfully pushed back against some proposed restrictions—such as additional Pell

Grant eligibility requirements that would have mandated taking more credit hours—other troubling elements remained.

One particularly concerning provision was the increase in the endowment tax on private universities. The final version adopted the Senate's smaller increase rather than the much higher rate proposed by the House, but it still represents a significant hit.

Beyond the tax provisions, our major focus continues to be on research funding. The proposed budget included a 40% reduction for NIH and a 56% cut to NSF. However, cuts began even before the budget was released, in the form of grant cancellations.

In several cases, researchers were informed that grants—already funded and underway—were being terminated due to changes in administration priorities. Some of these grants were cut under the guise of opposing DEI, while others targeted areas such as climate change, AIDS, and vaccine research. This is deeply troubling.

What's especially concerning is the apparent weaponization of research funding as a punitive response to unrelated campus controversies—something we've seen at institutions like Harvard, Penn, and Columbia. Universities conduct research on behalf of the American people and serve as a primary mechanism through which our government advances innovation and discovery. When a cancer research grant is canceled mid-project, it doesn't just hurt faculty or students—it undermines societal progress.

Before World War II, universities were hesitant to accept federal funding due to fears of government interference in academic research. After the war, visionaries like Vannevar Bush helped establish a post-war scientific enterprise, convincing institutions that public funding and academic freedom could coexist. Unfortunately, today we are witnessing those old fears becoming reality once again.

Legal Action and Public Advocacy Campaign:

AAU has existed for 125 years—founded in 1900—and until this year, had never sued the federal government. Now, we have initiated four lawsuits, adding the Department of Defense to the list that already included NIH, NSF, and the Department of Energy. These lawsuits challenge the unilateral capping of indirect cost recovery—implemented without notice and in violation of OMB's uniform grant guidance. The lawsuits have progressed well so far, and we remain optimistic. They are being pursued under the Administrative Procedure Act, not the broader issues addressed in recent Supreme Court decisions.

More broadly, AAU has shifted into crisis-response mode. Increasing numbers of university presidents are traveling to D.C. to meet with members of Congress. The AAU Board, which previously met quarterly, is now meeting weekly. A new ad hoc committee has been established to help build a renewed University–Federal Government partnership. We are also working closely with various constituency groups to raise concerns about the sustained attacks on

research and higher education—making the case that what's at stake is not just the future of universities, but the future of the nation.

As a major new step, AAU has launched a 501(c)(4) organization to support a nationwide advertising campaign. The campaign is already live in key states, encouraging constituents to contact their members of Congress. The message is simple but powerful: Research matters. Whether it's agriculture, health, national security, or economic growth—research drives American strength.

And the people conducting this research—many of whom came to this country because they believe in its values—deserve our support. They are essential to our future.

7. Litigation Against Banning Chinese Students from the U.S.

Speaker: Clay Zhu 朱可亮, Founder and President, Chinese American Legal Defense Alliance

- CourtListener: [Chen v. Noem \(4:25-cv-03292\)](#)

Clay covered two lawsuits that CALDA filed against the federal and state governments in 2025. He came to this country with nothing in his pocket and is very thankful for the opportunities it has provided. However, he is also deeply frustrated with the current situation.

In early April, CALDA learned about the mass termination of student status for thousands of international students, most of whom are from China. In response, CALDA filed a case, *Chen v. Noem* (4:25-cv-03292), in the Northern District of California. On May 22nd, the judge issued a nationwide preliminary injunction. As a result, the Student and Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS) statuses of most affected students have been restored.

However, CALDA also discovered that, simultaneously, DHS and ICE had terminated the students' SEVIS statuses, and the State Department had revoked their student visas. CALDA does not yet have an exact count of how many students are affected but plans to amend the complaint later this month to add the State Department as an additional defendant, in an effort to restore the revoked visas. Due to the recent Supreme Court decision in *Trump v. CASA*, CALDA may also need to further amend the complaint to pursue the case as a class action. Meanwhile, in Texas, Governor Greg Abbott signed Senate Bill 17 (SB17) into law on June 20, 2025. The bill restricts certain foreign purchases of real property in Texas. CALDA filed a motion for a preliminary injunction and a motion for class certification the day before Independence Day. This is one of the first cases filed under the recent Supreme Court ruling in *Trump v. CASA*, which prompted CALDA to file these lawsuits on a class-action basis.

CALDA is currently awaiting a judge assignment and hearing date. Since the law takes effect on September 1, there is less than two months to obtain a court decision—followed potentially by an appeal.

8. Remarks by Dr. Tony Chan

Speaker: Tony Chan 陳繁昌, Former President of King Abdullah University of Science and Technology and Former President of the Hong Kong University of Science and Technology

- 2025/03/14 Tony Chan: [The Role of Research Universities in a Changing World Order](#)

After having spent 20 years teaching at UCLA, Tony spent the following 15 years abroad—including six years as the President of King Abdullah University of Science and Technology in Saudi Arabia. Tony talked about his article, [The Role of Research Universities in a Changing World Order](#), which was recently published in *Not Alone* by Elsevier.

Recent Developments Since the article was written in early 2024

Much has changed since March—Harvard’s authority to admit international students and its tax-exempt status are under threat, visa policies have shifted, and there have been dramatic funding cuts to the NIH and NSF. The NSF’s Directorate for Mathematical and Physical Sciences, where I once served, faces a proposed 75% cut. This level of disruption affects all research universities and makes long-term planning nearly impossible.

We’ve also seen a wave of university president resignations. The landscape is shifting rapidly, and academia is scrambling to respond. It’s no longer just about campus governance—it’s about our role in society and in global competitiveness.

Tony framed his article around East-West academic competition—particularly between the U.S. and China, though India now plays a growing role.

Talent Flow and Research Collaboration

Recently, Tony co-founded a virtual platform called [Dialogue on Asian Universities](#)” (DAU). On June 23, DAU had its 11th dialogue, titled [Tectonic Shift in the Global Talent Chain: The Forces of Technology and Geopolitics](#), where Tony moderated a conversation between the presidents of two IITs—Delhi and Mumbai—and a leading AI researcher from Tsinghua University, formerly a senior VP at Microsoft in Redmond.

Ten years ago, 90% of IIT graduates came to the U.S. Today, that trend has reversed: 90% stay in India, where opportunities are booming. The same is true in China, which is actively attracting returnees at the peak of their careers.

Chinese students once saw the U.S. as the obvious destination. Now, many are reconsidering—questioning whether it's worth investing years here under such uncertainty. There's a push from the U.S.—visa hurdles, political hostility—and a growing pull from home countries.

Tony gave two striking examples:

1. **DeepSeek**, a competitive AI model to ChatGPT, was built in China by graduates who never studied abroad. That's a wake-up call.
2. **Meta** has been hiring talent away from **OpenAI**—many of these AI researchers are young, Chinese-born, and U.S.-trained. So while the government tries to limit student visas, industry thrives on the very people being pushed out. There's a major contradiction.

When it comes to research collaboration, the trend has also reversed. Fifteen years ago, U.S. faculty were eager to collaborate globally—especially with China. Now, fears over dual-use technologies and national security have shut many doors.

This is understandable to a degree, but we've managed dual-use issues before—through clearances and containment. What we have now is a blanket policy that hinders not just collaboration with China, but progress on global challenges like climate, energy, and health. Joint ventures are collapsing. Multiple American-Chinese university partnerships—at Berkeley, Michigan, and Georgia Tech—have closed under political pressure. Others are likely considering exit strategies.

Recommendations

Universities represent something deeper: values, leadership, and change in society. What's happening now has broader implications—for all of society. Here's the irony: the Chinese system is often criticized for authoritarianism, lack of free speech, and human rights issues. Yet, in recent years, I've seen a disturbing erosion of these very things in the U.S. Tony offered four recommendations:

1. **Academia must remember its core mission**—to serve society and humanity for the long term. Bending to short-term political pressure may be expedient but risks undermining academic integrity, reputation, and the ability to attract talent.
2. **Universities must adapt** to shifting geopolitical and economic realities. Ignoring national security concerns isn't an option. But universities should propose *pragmatic frameworks* that enable collaboration within necessary constraints.
3. **Reaffirm academic freedom**. Without that, there is no point in having American-style universities.

4. **Leadership requires courage.** It's easier to do nothing. But if you're in a leadership position, that's not an option. If you can't lead, you should step aside.

The bigger question is: how did we let it get this far without the public engaging? When we speak, people assume it's self-interest. We need third-party voices to make the case for why academia matters—beyond campus walls.