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The US-China Education Trust



The US-China Education Trust (USCET) and Beijing Foreign Studies University (BFSU) co-sponsored the **2024 American Studies Network** (ASN) conference on the campus of BFSU from October 25 to 27, 2024. This conference celebrated the 20th anniversary of the founding of the American Studies Network in 2004. This milestone event was marked by the first in-person ASN conference since the pandemic reshaped global engagement, successfully bringing together prominent speakers and dynamic panel discussions centered on the theme of *Connecting People, Cultures and Ideas: Re-examining Sino-American Exchange*.

Ambassador **Julia Chang Bloch**, Founder and President of USCET, was originally slated to speak at the APA Justice monthly meeting on November 18, 2024. Unfortunately, she was unable to participate due to illness. **Rosie Levine**, the Executive Director of USCET, stepped in to represent her and address the meeting.

Rosie comes to USCET from the United States Institute of Peace (USIP), where she has been a senior program analyst working on the China program. In April 2024, Levine was named a Project Fellow in The Penn Project on the Future of US-China Relations. Prior to USIP, Rosie was responsible for the Public Intellectuals Program at the National Committee on U.S.-China Relations (NCUSCR).

USCET is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization housed at the George Washington University in Washington, DC. Ambassador Chang Bloch was the first Asian American to achieve the rank of ambassador. After retiring from diplomatic service, she took a visiting fellowship position at Peking University and realized that the study of America in China needed significant support to be able to fully understand the richness of American culture.

This year, USCET just celebrated its 25th Anniversary. USCET has traditionally worked at the intersection of higher education and U.S.- China relations but also spanned a lot of different types of engagements, including media studies and student issues. Facing the downturn of the U.S.-China relationship, USCET has an eye towards how it can help to sustain the networks between the two countries at the academic level amid the challenging environment on both sides. USCET works with 73 organizations across China.

USCET's work has also expanded to serve communities in both directions. As scholars, students and professionals in both the U.S. and China are seeking a better understanding of each other. At this moment USCET is seeing all sorts of pressures in the academic landscape within China that make it difficult for Chinese scholars to both do their work and better understand the U.S. Restricted academic freedom and other types of restrictions on international travel and participation in international conferences makes it very hard for Chinese scholars to do their work. On the U.S. side, we have challenges related to the China Initiative and perceptions both real and reputational. Some fear their travel to China might be seen as suspect back here in the US.

This also trickled down to students. As of this spring there were about 800 Americans studying in China down from its peak of around 15,000. The USCET premise is that no matter what comes next in the U.S.-China relationship, whether it is cooperation, competition, or somewhere in between, we really need to have a core of Americans who deeply understand China and 800 students is not going to be sufficient, no matter what the future holds. So USCET is looking at ways in which we can support the study of China holistically here, and then vice versa.

In that spirit USCET just held one of its flagship programs, a conference in Beijing celebrating the 20th Anniversary of the American Studies Network, on October 25-27, 2024. The conference brought together scholars of the United States and the American studies community from across China to meet each other, engage with their peers, and share research.

Rosie reported that USCET had a successful conference. Over 60 abstracts were submitted from professors to graduate students and undergraduates. The study of the United States in

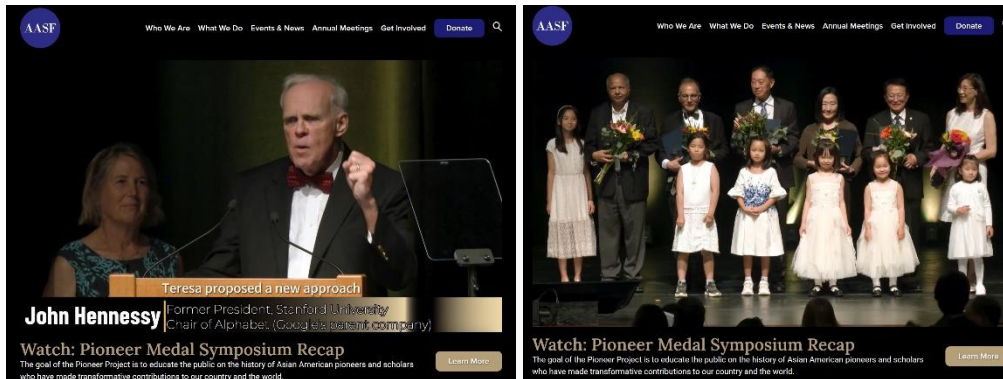
China is healthy. They are under severe pressures as well. USCET is looking at ways that it can both engage with the scholarly community in China as well as policymakers here to try to keep those channels open and engage robustly.

In addressing how the downturn in the U.S.-China relations impacts the Asian American community, particularly in the field of the U.S.-China relations, USCET wants to make sure the pipeline of expertise on China here reflects the diversity of America, including Asian Americans who have felt a lot of pressures in the relationship, both in their personal capacity as well as fear that engaging in this type of work might make it harder to engage with their family back in China, or facing discrimination here in the U.S. organizations that they want to work for, including the U.S. Government.

USCET is currently in an early design phase of some programs to help to create a robust pipeline of Asian Americans interested in the U.S.-China relations and welcomes help from those in this group to think through that series of projects.

Read more about the 20th Anniversary ASN Conference held at BFSU in Beijing: <https://bit.ly/4iDV94d>

Updates from The Asian American Scholar Forum



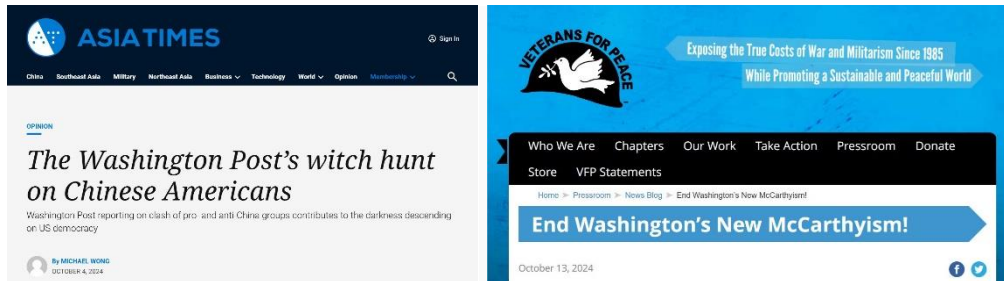
During the APA Justice monthly meeting on November 18, 2024, **Kai Li**, Vice President of Asian American Scholar Forum (AASF), speaking on behalf of **Gisela Perez Kusakawa**, Executive Director of AASF, who is on maternity leave, provided updates on two key activities:

- **Asian American Pioneer Medals Symposium.** The inaugural symposium and ceremony at Stanford University in July were highly successful, with over 1,300 attendees and notable speakers, including **John Hennessy**, former Stanford's president and Google's parent company chair, and **Jonathan Levin**, their new president. A highlight video is available on aasforum.org. The next event is tentatively scheduled for

July 25-27, 2025, at Stanford, featuring a science symposium, an awards ceremony, and a policy symposium. Invitations will be sent once details are finalized.

- **National Survey on Talent Migration.** A new round of surveys is being prepared to investigate why research talent is leaving the U.S. for other countries, including China. This round aims to address gaps from the previous survey with the goal of supporting advocacy efforts.

Veterans for Peace



- Veterans for Peace: <https://www.veteransforpeace.org/>
- 2024/10/13 Veterans for Peace: [End Washington's New McCarthyism!](#)
- 2024/10/04 Asia Times: [The Washington Post's witch hunt on Chinese Americans](#)

During the APA Justice monthly meeting on November 18, 2024, **Michael Wong**, Board Member and Former National Vice President, Veterans for Peace (VFP), introduced VFP and described some of its recent activities.

VFP is a national US organization with several international chapters of military veterans and allies committed to promoting peace and ending war. Founded in 1985, VFP advocates peaceful solutions to conflicts, addressing issues like nuclear disarmament, veterans' rights, and the costs of war on communities and the environment.

Michael shared his concerns about a rising wave of suppression reminiscent of McCarthyism, escalating geopolitical tensions, and threats to advocacy groups.

VFP has long worked to promote peace and counter the trend of endless wars. Michael pointed to troubling signs of a repressive climate targeting dissent and advocacy efforts within the United States, highlighting incidents where activists and groups are being unjustly labeled as foreign agents. Examples included alleged accusation against Code Pink protesters advocating for Gaza, wrongly associating them with China, as well as a Black socialist group acquitted of charges of being Russian agents, noting they were merely advocating for improved diplomatic relations.

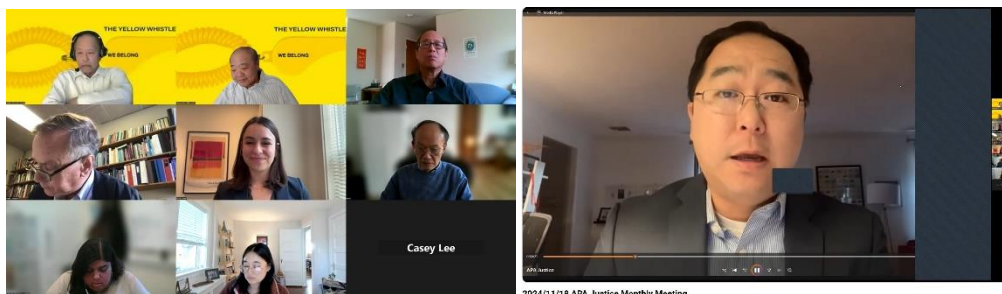
Michael warned about House Resolution 9495, which could empower the U.S. Treasury Department to revoke nonprofit status from organizations accused of supporting terrorism, with decisions made without evidence and retroactively reviewing statements up to three years old. The resolution's vague language raises alarm, as it could allow for punitive actions against groups advocating controversial positions. Michael expressed concern that such measures could lead to misuse by future administrations, citing fears even from mainstream organizations like MoveOn.org.

Michael also recounted a protest during **Xi Jinping's** visit for the APEC Conference in 2023. He described how anti-China protesters aggressively confronted Chinese Americans welcoming Xi and Biden's discussions. According to Michael, these anti-China demonstrators pushed their way into the pro-Xi crowd, filmed the incident, and later framed the Chinese Americans as attackers. He criticized the media, including the *Washington Post*, for accepting the narrative of the aggressors without scrutinizing the evidence.

Drawing parallels to the 2019 Hong Kong protests, Michael noted similar tactics being employed domestically. He described the Hong Kong protests as violent riots that involved firebombs, physical attacks, and other destructive acts. Wong argued that these protests were supported by U.S. entities like the National Endowment for Democracy, linking them to broader geopolitical strategies. He expressed concern that these "color revolution" tactics are now being repurposed within the United States to suppress dissent and demonize advocacy groups.

Michael's commentary underscores a broader fear that the political climate, particularly under a Trump administration, could worsen. He emphasized the importance of vigilance and continued advocacy to resist these trends and protect the ability of groups to operate freely and promote peace. His organization remains committed to addressing these challenges and fostering international and domestic cooperation for peace and justice.

2024/11/18 APA Justice Monthly Meeting Summary



During the APA Justice monthly meeting on November 18, 2024, **Nisha Ramachandran**, Executive Director of Congressional Asian Pacific American Caucus (CAPAC), provided the following updates as Congress wrapped up and preparations for the 119th Congress began:

- **Pending Legislation.** The National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) is under negotiation, with specific provisions being monitored, such as vetting foreign researchers at Department of Energy facilities. Government funding discussions are ongoing, including efforts to reinstate the China initiative.
- **Post-Election Transition.** House and Senate members are organizing for next year. CAPAC will welcome new members, increasing its size from 22 to 24 members, reflecting growth in representation. **Andy Kim** is joining the Senate, enhancing CAPAC's influence.

Joanna YangQing Derman, Program Director, provided the following updates on recent activities of Advancing Justice | AAJC:

- **Opposition to Alien Land Laws.** Continued efforts to combat such laws at state and federal levels, particularly in Texas, where new bills are being introduced, including advocacy to prevent land law provisions from being included in NDAA negotiations.
- **China Initiative Concerns.** Emphasis on opposing efforts to reinstate the China Initiative, with strategies to mobilize community resistance.
- **House Select Committee on CCP.** Opposing its reauthorization due to divisive rhetoric and its contribution to anti-Asian sentiment.
- **Immigration Concerns.** Monitoring reports of potential mass deportations targeting Chinese immigrants and Chinese Americans under President-elect Trump.

In addition, **Peter Michelson**, Luke Blossom Professor in the School of Humanities & Sciences and Professor of Physics, Stanford University, outlined recent efforts to oppose the reinstatement of the China Initiative, a policy criticized for disproportionately targeting academic researchers and undermining U.S. efforts to attract and retain global talent.

Together with his colleague **Steven Kivelson**, Peter authored letters to House and Senate leadership expressing strong opposition to the revival of the initiative. The first letter, sent on October 8, was endorsed by 166 Stanford faculty members. A follow-up letter on October 28 gathered nearly 2,000 endorsements from faculty and senior staff across U.S. universities.

These letters emphasized the detrimental effects of such initiatives on international talent recruitment, as highlighted by a 2024 National Academy of Sciences report. The report, commissioned by the U.S. Department of Defense, labeled the China Initiative "highly problematic," particularly for its disproportionate focus on academia and its adverse effects on Asian American scholars.

Peter stressed the civil rights abuses associated with the initiative, citing prominent cases where scholars were unjustly prosecuted and later acquitted. He emphasized the need to defend individuals facing such allegations by providing expert legal resources. He also participated in a panel at Stanford's Hoover Institution, where he and other experts including **Yasheng Huang**,

Founding President of Asian American Scholar Forum, **Glenn Tiffert**, Senior Research Fellow at the Hoover Institution, and **Zhenan Bao**, K.K. Lee Professor of Chemical Engineering at Stanford University discussed U.S.-China science and technology relations.

Peter summarized comments by Professor Bao on the China Initiative's impact on her research group, highlighting confusion over shifting and unclear rules for collaborative research. Previously allowed practices were suddenly prohibited without clear guidance. Peter agreed with Professor Bao's perspective and emphasized the importance of clarity in research policies. He also urged colleagues to identify and challenge rules that are nonsensical or harmful to prevent adverse effects on the U.S. scientific and academic community.

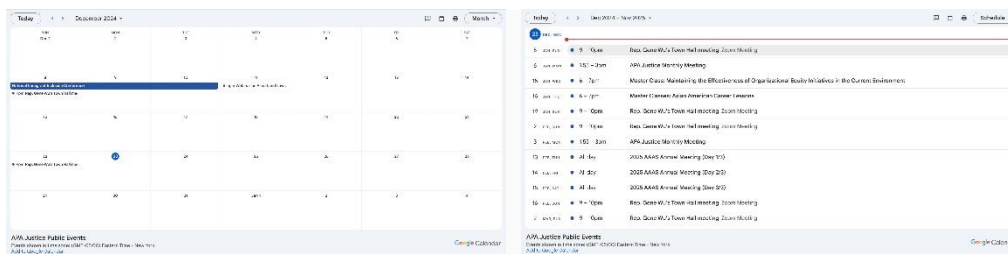
Peter further mentioned the Secure Platform initiative, established under the CHIPS and Science Act of 2022 and funded by the National Science Foundation. With a budget of \$67 million, the platform aims to identify foreign threats, enhance research security, and provide training to the academic and business communities. Peter called for engagement with academia in this effort and stressed the importance of educating legislators and stakeholders to foster rational, evidence-based policies. He concluded by advocating for clarity and fairness in research policies to strengthen the U.S. position in global scientific collaboration.

A summary for the APA Justice monthly meeting on November 18, 2024, is being prepared. It will be posted at <https://bit.ly/3kxkqxp> upon completion.

NOTE: Judith Teruya [has been appointed](#) Executive Director of CAPAC which will be chaired by Rep. Grace Meng in the 119th Congress. Judith has been a Senior Advisor at the White House Initiative on Asian Americans, Native Hawaiians, and Pacific Islanders. She has also served as a Designated Federal Officer for the President's Advisory Commission on Asian Americans, Native Hawaiians, and Pacific Islanders. We thank **Nisha Ramachandran** and **Casey Lee** for their many years of dedicated service at CAPAC.

News and Activities for the Communities

1. APA Justice Community Calendar



Upcoming Events:

2025/01/05 Rep. Gene Wu's Town Hall Meeting
2025/01/06 APA Justice Monthly Meeting
2025/01/15 Master Class: Maintaining the Effectiveness of Organizational Equity Initiatives in the Current Environment
2024/01/16 Master Classes: Asian American Career Lessons
2025/01/19 Rep. Gene Wu's Town Hall Meeting
2025/02/02 Rep. Gene Wu's Town Hall Meeting
2025/02/13-15 2025 AAAS Annual Meeting
2025/02/16 Rep. Gene Wu's Town Hall Meeting

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

2. Call for Action Combatting Discrimination and Bias at NeurIPS 2024

change.org Start a petition My petitions Browse Membership

Request for Action: Combatting Discrimination and Bias at NeurIPS 2024

On December 16, 2024, a coalition led by the Association of Chinese Scholars in Computing (ACSIC 北美计算机华人学者协会) posted an open letter to the Neural Information Processing Systems (NeurIPS) Board, 2024 Organizing Committee, and NeurIPS Community in change.org, expressing serious concerns regarding statements made by Dr. **Rosalind Picard** from the MIT Media Lab during her keynote talk at the 38th NeurIPS annual conference.

According to the open letter, NeurIPS has a long and respected history of fostering a community that is rich in diversity and collaboration. Researchers, students, and professionals of Chinese origin, among many others, made valuable contributions to the community and society. We must work towards creating an environment that fosters an inclusive environment.

However, during the 2024 NeurIPS Conference, Dr. Picard singled out Chinese scholars when discussing academic dishonesty. When an attendee expressed concerns about this during Q&A, Dr. Picard's response further raised concerns that her words feed into harmful and unfounded stereotypes and racial bias against scholars of Chinese origin.

The open letter recommended four actions to the NeurIPS Board.

On December 18, 2024, Dr. Picard issued a statement, stating that "*While I became aware at the end of my talk that I had caused significant pain, I have learned over these past days the depth of the damage I did. I have talked directly with students and faculty colleagues at MIT who are of Chinese descent and who have suffered horrible prejudice and mistreatment, and I am arranging to meet with other members of our Chinese community at MIT to learn more about what they are experiencing. For all of you in our community who are hurting because of my actions, I am deeply sorry for having caused you this additional pain.*"

Read the coalition letter at <https://bit.ly/3DrfIR9>. Read Dr. Picard's statement: <https://bit.ly/4gNRDm7>.

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APA Justice Task Force is a non-partisan platform to build a sustainable ecosystem that addresses racial profiling concerns and to facilitate, inform, and advocate on selected issues related to justice and fairness for the Asian Pacific American community. For more information, please refer to the new APA Justice website under development at www.apajusticetaskforce.org. We value your feedback. Please send your comments to contact@apajustice.org.

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