Dear President \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_,

I write to express my concern regarding the Confucius Institute on your campus.

Confucius Institutes are funded by the Chinese government and serve as outposts of China’s overseas propaganda. They threaten the integrity of the American educational system, serve the interests of a foreign authoritarian government, and may compromise American national security. I urge you to close the Confucius Institutes immediately and adopt policies that protect the university from future problematic contracts with authoritarian governments.

The federal government is taking a close look at Confucius Institutes, and a growing, bipartisan coalition is proposing and drafting legislation.

In February [FBI Director Christopher Wray testified before the US Senate](https://www.rubio.senate.gov/public/index.cfm/press-releases?ID=F998DBAA-6C2B-4BA0-891C-7647BDEAD31F) that his agency is taking “investigative steps” at Confucius Institutes that may be engaged in espionage.

Also in February, [Senator Marco Rubio (R-FL) urged](https://www.rubio.senate.gov/public/index.cfm/press-releases?id=576FD128-05B9-4FF6-A01E-E9B8A153C786) all Confucius Institutes and Classrooms in Florida to close. He [called on the Senate](https://www.rubio.senate.gov/public/index.cfm/press-releases?ID=7E7A5CE6-92A2-4EA1-ADE5-234A1D5B4EBA) to require greater transparency in foreign gifts to American colleges and universities and to make colleges and universities with Confucius Institutes ineligible for a portion of federal funding.

In March, Senator Marco Rubio (R-FL), Senator Tom Cotton (R-AR), and Representative Joe Wilson (R-SC) introduced the [Foreign Influence Transparency Act of 2018](https://joewilson.house.gov/media-center/press-releases/congressman-joe-wilson-r-sc-and-senator-marco-rubio-r-fl-introduce-the), which would require programs such as Confucius Institutes to register under the Foreign Agents Registration Act, and require colleges to disclose more information about foreign donations.

Also in March, [Representative Seth Moulton (D-MA)](https://www.bostonglobe.com/metro/2018/03/09/moulton-wants-local-colleges-cut-ties-with-chinese-institute/2l5Y9Oa1WgG3SuapqGCaNP/story.html) urged all Confucius Institutes in Massachusetts to close. He also wrote to another 38 colleges and universities, warning them against opening new Confucius Institutes.

In 2014, the House Subcommittee on Africa, Global Health, Global Human Rights, and International Organizations under [Representative Chris Smith held a hearing](https://chrissmith.house.gov/news/documentsingle.aspx?DocumentID=397762) on risks posed by Confucius Institutes. Representative Smith asked the Government Accountability Office to issue a report on Confucius Institutes, which the GAO is now beginning work on.

A number of studies have shown that Confucius Institutes teach American students a whitewashed version of China’s history and politics and pressure American scholars to silence their critiques of China.

In 2017, the National Association of Scholars (NAS) concluded in a report, [*Outsourced to China: Confucius Institutes and Soft Power in American Higher Education*](https://www.nas.org/projects/confucius_institutes), that “to a large extent, universities have made improper concessions that jeopardize academic freedom and institutional autonomy.” NAS found that Confucius Institutes are operated by a Chinese government agency, the Hanban, which is overseen by officials from the Chinese Ministry of Education, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and the State Press and Publications Department Administration (which handles propaganda).

NAS also found that the Hanban provides textbooks and selects and pays the Confucius Institute teachers, who are Chinese nationals trained to present the Chinese government in a positive light. One Confucius Institute director said if pressed to answer a question about Tiananmen Square, where in 1989 the Chinese government massacred democracy demonstrators, she would “show a picture and point out the beautiful architecture.”

In 2014, the [American Association of University Professors](https://www.aaup.org/report/confucius-institutes) (AAUP) also criticized Confucius Institutes as a partnership that “sacrificed the integrity of the university and its academic staff.” The AAUP further noted that “Confucius Institutes function as an arm of the Chinese state and are allowed to ignore academic freedom.”

Marshall Sahlins, Distinguished Service Professor Emeritus of Anthropology and of Social Sciences at the University Chicago, has documented in [*Confucius Institutes: Academic Malware*](http://press.uchicago.edu/ucp/books/book/distributed/C/bo20637267.html)numerous examples of Confucius Institutes presenting propaganda or curtailing academic freedom. And a recent documentary, [*In the Name of Confucius*](http://inthenameofconfuciusmovie.com/), reveals footage of Chinese officials describing how Western universities “work for us” in supporting China’s soft power abroad.

Federal agencies are investigating Confucius Institutes, and Congress is weighing legislation to address the Chinese government’s infiltration of American college campuses.

I urge you to close your university’s Confucius Institute immediately, for the integrity of the curriculum, for the intellectual freedom of students and professors, and for the safety of all members of the campus community.

Respectfully,

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