



Written by [Luis Miguel](#) on December 24, 2021

Princeton Took Millions From China, Let Professor Rot in Iranian Prison

Princeton's [ties to the Chinese Communist Party](#) (CCP) are coming to light simultaneous to a scandal involving a former professor who claims the Ivy League school left him to rot in an Iranian prison.

According to federal records, the university took millions of dollars from a Chinese state-sponsored university and the founder of a think tank aligned with the CCP.

Princeton reportedly received \$4.6 million from CCP-controlled Peking University to finance research hubs related to drug development and computer science. Tung Chee-hwa, the founder of the China-U.S. Exchange Foundation, has given at least \$1 million to fund Princeton's Center on Contemporary China.



Xiyue Wang (AP Images)

Both Tung and the China-U.S. Exchange Foundation (CUSEF) are key components of the CCP's foreign influence campaign.

China invested heavily in building relationships with American universities and think tanks in recent years. FBI director Christopher Wray has warned of China's increased use of "non-traditional collectors (of intelligence), especially in the academic setting." In 2018, the Justice Department formed the China Initiative to combat China's efforts to steal technology from American businesses and universities and to influence American policymakers.

But Princeton and other top schools have taken issue with the China Initiative, arguing it creates a "chilling effect" for academic research and foments "anti-Asian bias." Nearly 200 Princeton faculty members [called on](#) Attorney General Merrick Garland in October to end the initiative. They asserted that the investigations have gone beyond economic espionage and instead targeted researchers for failing to disclose their work for Beijing.

"The Chinese Communist Party's goal is to spread soft power influence while siphoning American research to use for its own nefarious agenda," says Will Coggin, managing director of the American Security Institute, which compiled the data on China's donations to Princeton from Department of Education databases.

"That's why it's exceptionally concerning that Princeton accepted \$4.6 million from the Chinese government to research drug development and computer science—two areas where China is outpacing the United States."

The *Washington Free Beacon* notes:

The Chinese government, through Peking University's satellite campus in Shenzhen,



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awarded Princeton a five-year, \$4.6 million contract in June 2018 to establish research facilities that focused on drug discovery and computer science, according to Department of Education records.

Months after the donation, the Chinese Communist Party tightened control of student activities at Peking University. The school announced it was implementing “internal control and measures” in order to control student activist groups that criticized the government. ... Princeton received two anonymous donations from China for \$1.3 million earlier this year to fund professorships in the school’s computer science department, according to Department of Education records.

A former Princeton historian, Xiyue Wang, is now suing the university. He claims Princeton officials in early 2016 urged him to study in Iran in the wake of the Obama administration’s unclear deal with that country. Wang was arrested months later on charges of spying on behalf of the United States and remained in an Iranian prison for political prisoners for three years until being freed during a prisoner exchange in December 2019.

In a [lawsuit](#) filed last month, Wang says Princeton tried to prevent his wife from publicizing his situation in order to protect its own reputation and maintain a good relationship with Iran. Wang condemned Princeton and its Iran Center for following the advice of “pro-regime activists and academics” prior to and after his arrest.

Additionally, Wang charges that Princeton lawyers and administrators urged him not to seek refuge in Tehran’s Swiss embassy after he first began to fear for his safety.

“Everything Princeton did and abstained from doing was centered around absolving its institutional responsibility, protecting its institutional reputation, and maintaining its political relations with Iran,” Wang says in his lawsuit.

Wang notes in his lawsuit that Seyed Hossein Mousavian, a former Iranian diplomat, serves as a scholar at Princeton. Mousavian was ambassador to Germany when four Iranian dissidents were assassinated on German soil. He attended the funeral of Qassem Soleimani, the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps leader killed by American forces last year.

Princeton isn’t the only Ivy League School with close ties to China. This week, a federal jury found Charles Lieber, a Harvard University professor who formerly chaired the school’s chemistry and chemical biology department, [guilty](#) of two counts of making false statements to federal authorities in relation to a Chinese government recruitment program he was involved with.



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