*Outsourced to China:   
Confucius Institutes and Soft Power in American Higher Education*

National Association of Scholars  
[www.nas.org/ConfuciusInstitutes](http://www.nas.org/ConfuciusInstitutes)

**Overview**

Since 2004, the Chinese government has planted Confucius Institutes that offer Chinese language and culture courses at colleges and universities around the world—including more than 80 in the United States. These Institutes educate a generation of American students to know nothing more of China than the regime’s official history.

***Outsourced to China***, a 2017 report by the National Association of Scholars, is a study of the 12 Confucius Institutes in New York and New Jersey. It examines China’s soft power influence through American higher education, and reveals new data on Confucius Institutes’ funding, hiring, and academic freedom policies.

**The Facts**

* **Chinese Oversight.** A Chinese government agency, the Hanban, provides operating funds, screens and pays Confucius Institutes’ Chinese teachers and staff members, provides textbooks, and approves Confucius Institute courses, which are often offered for credit.
* **Focused on the USA**. The United States has more Confucius Institutes and Confucius Classrooms than any other country. [As of April 2020, there were 86 Confucius Institutes in the country](https://www.nas.org/blogs/article/how_many_confucius_institutes_are_in_the_united_states).

**The Findings**

* **Weapons of Soft Power.** Confucius Institutes avoid Chinese political history and human rights abuses, portray Taiwan and Tibet as undisputed territories of China, and tend to respect China’s censorious speech preferences.
* **Intellectual Freedom Compromised.** Official Hanban policy requires Confucius Institutes to adhere to Chinese law.
* **Unmentionables: Tiananmen, Tibet, Taiwan.** Multiple people connected to Confucius Institutes reported taboos on topics censored in China, such as the Tiananmen Square massacre.
* **No Transparency.** None of our 12 case study institutions publicly releases copies of its contracts withthe Hanban or partner Chinese universities.
* **Entanglement.** In addition to providing funding and free textbooks and teachers, Confucius Institutes help attract full-tuition-paying Chinese students, fund scholarships for American students to study abroad, and are the conduit by which college presidents and administrators enjoy trips to and state dinners in China.

**Recommendations**

* Colleges and universities with Confucius Institutes should **shut them down**.
* Federal and local governments should exercise oversight, protect American research by conditioning grants on the closure of an institution’s Confucius Institute, and require greater transparency.

**Download the full report:** [**www.nas.org/ConfuciusInstitutes**](http://www.nas.org/ConfuciusInstitutes)

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