

China.

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China is the most important country in the context of Global American Higher Education (GAHE). Its status as the greatest sender of foreign students to the United States for most of the 21st century is well known. Less appreciated is its standing as host to more American universities abroad than any other country. In this research brief, GAHE research assistant Saiansha Panangipalli analyzes findings from the data set and discusses their significance.

Overview

American universities abroad have a long history in China, Taiwan, and Hong Kong. The first colleges in this region were established by Christian missionaries in the 19th century. By 1949, there were 13 independent American colleges across China, mostly in eastern China. In 1949, the new communist government nationalized all foreign colleges. Some formerly American colleges closed or became Chinese universities, while others resumed operations abroad.

The implementation of modernization programs in 1978 and the resumption of diplomatic relations between China and the United States in 1979 created conditions for later establishment of new models of American higher education. In 1986, the Hopkins-Nanjing Center for Chinese and American Studies became the first American university to establish degree-granting programs in China after formal diplomatic ties were established.

The following years saw a slow but steady re-entry of American universities. It was only after 2001 when the presence of American universities started to increase sharply. The development of cooperative programs — microcampuses — was a major factor. These arrangements enable Chinese students to earn American degrees without travel to the United States. Thirty-four of the 38 active American microcampuses have been established since 2001. As of 2022, there are at least 59 American higher education institutions

IMPORTANT PERIODS IN CHINESE-AMERICAN HIGHER EDUCATION

- 1845-1901** Early Christian and missionary colleges established during and after the Opium Wars (First Opium War: 1839-1842; Second Opium War: 1856-1860).
- 1901-1949** Boxer Indemnity Scholarship established (1908). Ongoing internal and external conflicts affect operations of American colleges and institutions.
- 1949-1952** CCP nationalizes all foreign universities. The universities are amalgamated and reorganized into other institutions.
- 1979-2001** U.S. and China establish formal diplomatic ties (1979). Hopkins-Nanjing Center for Chinese and American Studies established (1986). China begins to encourage Sino-Foreign relations in higher education.
- 2001-2022** American universities in China rapidly increase, coinciding with China's economic reforms and entry into the WTO, the consequent economic growth, and U.S.' foreign policy pivot to Asia. U.S.-China tensions start impacting higher education relations.

— primarily microcampuses and international joint universities like Hopkins-Nanjing — in China, Taiwan, and Hong Kong.

According to the Global American Higher Education database, China (inclusive of Taiwan and Hong Kong) has hosted the most American higher education institutions (91) and currently hosts the greatest number of American universities currently operational (59). China has also had the greatest number of American universities close (32). Over a quarter of the American universities in this database were established in China, with over a fifth of the American universities active worldwide present in China. Forty percent of GAHE institutional closures have occurred in China.

The earliest American higher education institution in China (Hangchow University) was founded in 1845. The most recent university (Portland Institute, NJUPT) was established in 2021.

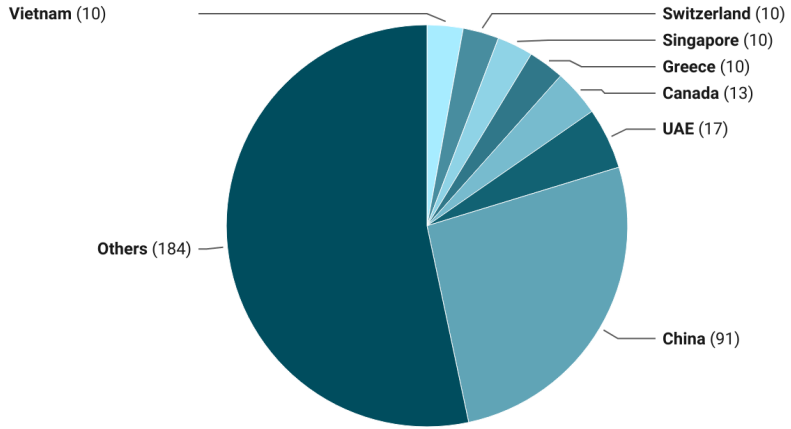
Early Christian colleges in China

Like many American higher education institutions established in the 19th century, the American colleges in China before 1949 had Christian characteristics and affiliations. Their main goal in the early years was to evangelize and convert the local population to Christianity (Bertelsen, 2014; Lutz, 1971). Most of these institutions were established in the years following the Opium Wars (First Opium War: 1839-1842; Second Opium War: 1856-1860). The wars had culminated in treaties that granted trade concessions, extraterritoriality, and the right for Christian missionaries to evangelize (Bertelsen, 2014; Cobbing, 2017; Lazich, 2006; Lutz, 1971; Mong, 2016; Zaeri, 2019).

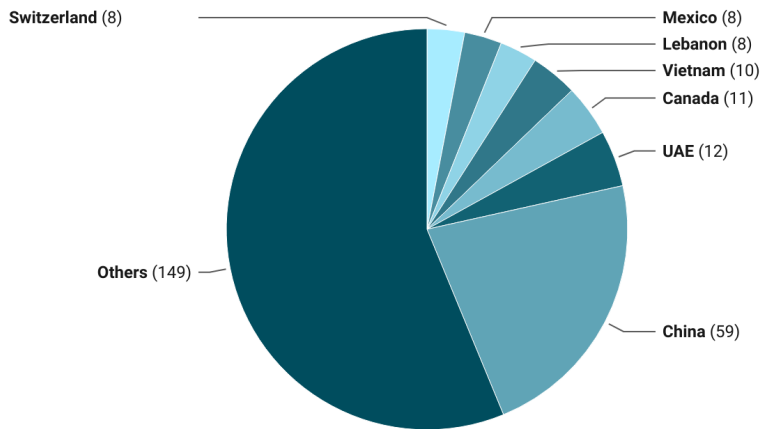
During the late 19th and early 20th centuries, the universities operated in an era of significant political turmoil. Two incidents of note were the Boxer Rebellion of 1899 and the Nanking Incident of 1925.

During the Boxer Rebellion of 1899, Chinese militias attacked foreign citizens, Christian missionaries, and Chinese Christians in the country (Bickers & Tiedemann, 2007; Lutz, 1971; Rosario, 2021; Sun, 2008). These incidents culminated in Chinese payment of indemnities to wronged parties, including the U.S.

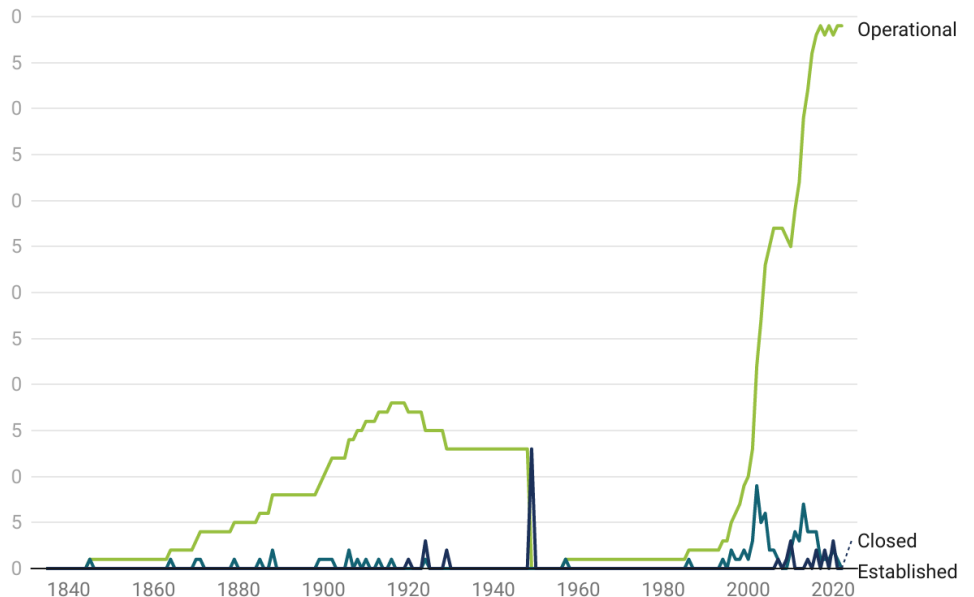
AMERICAN HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS WORLDWIDE (INACTIVE AND ACTIVE)



AMERICAN HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS WORLDWIDE (ACTIVE)



AMERICAN HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS IN CHINA, TAIWAN, AND HONG KONG OVER TIME



government. President Theodore Roosevelt used part of the reparations to create the Boxer Indemnity Scholarship. The scholarship was used to send Chinese students to the United States to study at American universities, with the aim of establishing a class of Western-educated future Chinese leaders. It was one of the earliest exchange programs created with the intent of cultivating favorable public opinion abroad (Hu, 2016; Ye, 2002). The Boxer Rebellion also led directly to the establishment of the Yale-in-China University in 1901 (Yale-China, nd). Though also Christian in origin, the emphasis of the university was tilted more towards delivering Western liberal arts and medical education (Yale and the World, 2018).

The other notable event, the Nanking Incident of 1927, took place during the Northern Expedition, a military campaign for unifying a fragmented China following the 1911 Revolution. The soldiers entering Nanking attacked foreign citizens, property, and consulates (Dennis, 1928; Fuller, 1942; The View from Ginling, n.d.). Inspired by the incident, Huachung University students protested by occupying administration buildings (Yale Divinity Library, n.d.). The takeover was one of many similar incidents performed by Chinese students in American institutions across the country to reject evangelization and protest against foreign powers (Bertelsen, 2014; Lutz, 1971).

War, turmoil, and nationalization

Such internal conflicts — first involving the reunification of China, then the power struggle between the centrists and right-wing revolutionaries against the leftist and Communist revolutionaries, and, later still, the Sino-Japanese War and World War II — greatly affected the operations of these universities. During these years, the universities saw disruption of classes, student strikes, and relocations (Erh, Smalley, & Johnston, 1998; United Board for Christian Higher Education in Asia Records, n.d.).

By 1949, American higher education institutions in China had experienced numerous mergers and name changes, leaving 13 universities: Cheeloo University, Fukien Christian University, Ginling College, Hangchow University, Huachung University, Hwa Nan College, Lingnan University, Soochow University, St. John's University, University of

Nanking, University of Shanghai, West China Union University, and Yenching University.

All of these universities were nationalized by the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) following the proclamation of the People's Republic of China (PRC) in 1949. Though the universities remained operational at first, the policies of the CCP eliminated their American and Christian characteristics and affiliations over the next few years. By 1952, all the universities had been amalgamated or reorganized into other Chinese universities (Lutz, 1971). In effect, more American universities abroad closed in 1949 than any other year, with all the closures happening solely in China. The GAHE data demonstrate the dramatic impact of the proclamation of the PRC on American international education abroad.

The Boxer Indemnity Scholarship had also ended in 1937 following the Japanese invasion of China. Shortly after World War II, the Korean War began, which saw the U.S. and China taking competing sides in the conflict. Taken together, these incidents meant the end of American higher education institutions in China, a period that would last for more than 35 years.

Modern American higher education in China

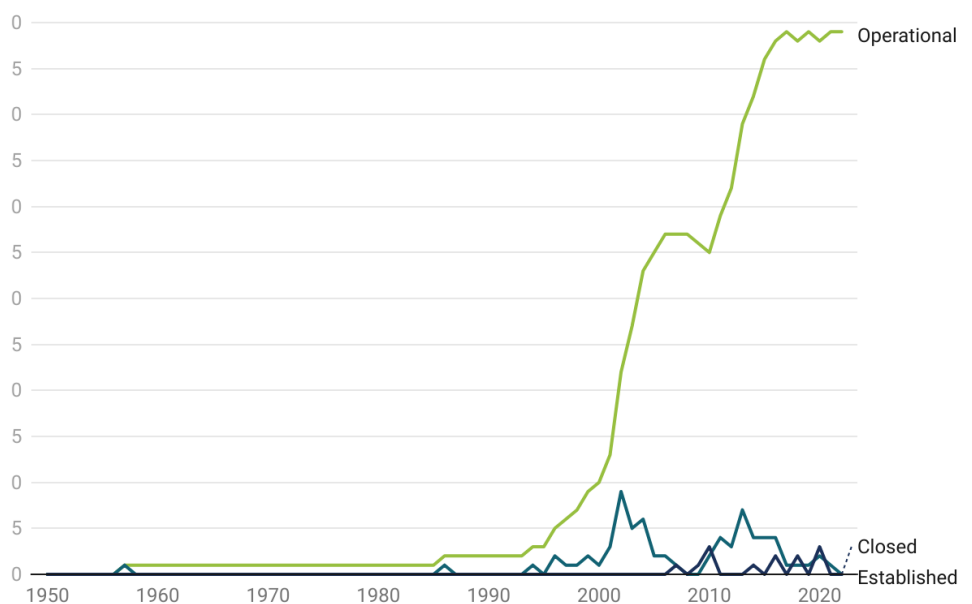
In 1986, American education regained a foothold in mainland China, with the

establishment of the Hopkins-Nanjing Center for Chinese and American Studies. This is an international joint university, a distinct higher education institution established or managed jointly by American and Chinese institutions. It followed the establishment of formal ties between the U.S. and China in 1979. Former Hopkins President Steven Muller and former NJU President Kuang Yaming worked together to create the center, recognizing the importance of improved understanding and relations between their respective countries (Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies, n.d.).

The 1980s ushered in the liberalization and modernization of China's economy and with it, of the education system. The Ministry of Education began to encourage collaboration between Chinese and American program providers. In 1995, the Ministry introduced regulations to encourage (and assure the quality of) Sino-foreign collaborations in higher education. This was taken a step further in 2003, when the Ministry formally allowed foreign universities to establish modified branch campuses in China in partnership with Chinese institutions, i.e. international joint universities like Hopkins-Nanjing (Ennew & Fujia, 2009; Gow, 2017; Tsang, 2000; Yang, 2018).

The number of American universities operational in China showed a steady

UNIVERSITIES ESTABLISHED, CLOSED, AND OPERATIONAL IN CHINA, TAIWAN, AND HONG KONG (POST 1949)



increase following 1995, and sharply increased following 2001. This rise coincides with China's entry into the World Trade Organization, an institution representing a neoliberal world order, and the culmination of years of economic reforms, privatization, and liberalization. It also coincides with China overtaking Japan as the world's second largest economy in 2010 (CFR, n.d.). These developments facilitated growing demand for more expensive and prestigious American universities accompanying China's rise in purchasing power. In 2011, President Barack Obama also called for a "pivot" of U.S. "investment — diplomatic, economic, strategic, and otherwise — toward the Asia-Pacific region" (Clinton, 2011). This call correlated with increasing interest of American higher education institutions in opening and operating campuses in the region as well.

For American universities, the decision to open and operate campuses internationally stems from the strategic importance given to internationalization starting from the late 1990s and early 21st century. After the Cold War, as neoliberal market ideals became globally predominant, the global higher education landscape became more competitive. Universities increasingly compete for students (especially international students), faculty, strategic partnerships, brand recognition, cross-border research collaborations and output, and funding. For American universities, internationalization is a way to distinguish themselves and gain economic advantage in this competitive landscape (Hudzik & Stohl, 2012; Long, 2020; de Wit & Merckx, 2012).

China's expanding research capabilities make the country's universities highly valuable partners for cross-border collaboration. Further, the high numbers of current and potential outbound Chinese students contribute significantly to American universities' revenue, and thus make it crucial for them to promote their brands among these audiences. A growing American alumni base in China also offers lucrative opportunities for funding and partnerships. All these factors have thus greatly encouraged American universities to set up campuses or offices in the region (Yang, 2018).

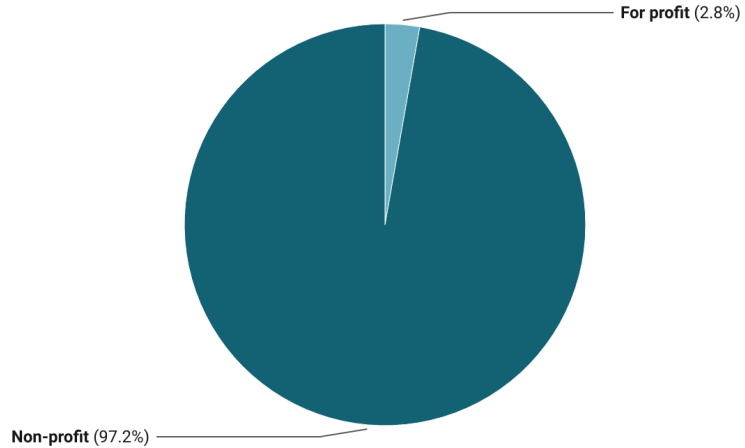
Among the 72 American universities in China after 1949, an overwhelming

majority of these (70 institutions) are not-for-profit institutions, with only two operating for profit. The predominance of this revenue model may have resulted from attempts to circumvent oft-quoted concerns that private

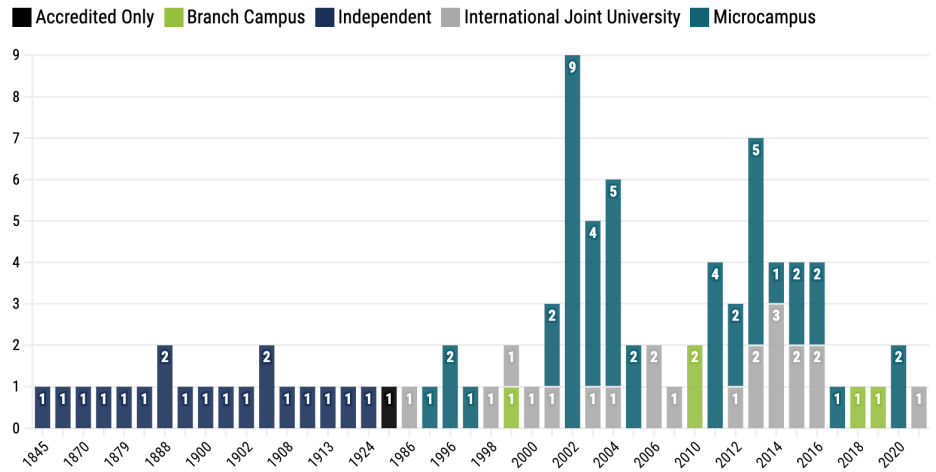
institutions compromise on quality of education (Ennew & Fujia, 2009).

Prior to 1949, all American universities were independent institutions. Institutions established after 1949 were much more dependent on

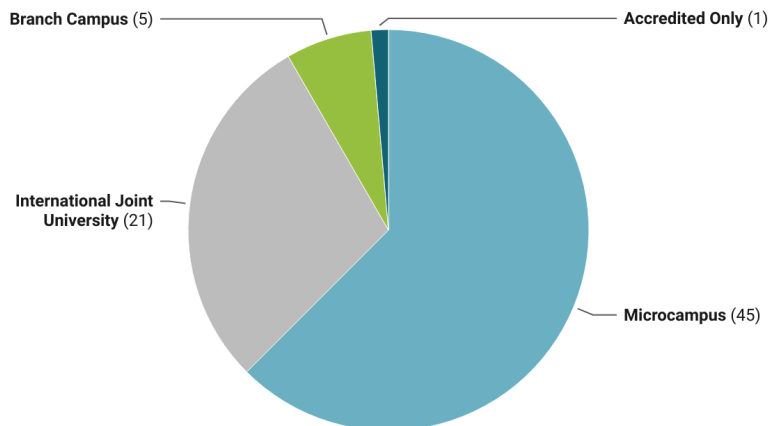
REVENUE MODEL OF AMERICAN UNIVERSITIES IN CHINA (POST 1949)



CLASSIFICATION OF AMERICAN UNIVERSITIES IN CHINA BY YEAR OF ESTABLISHMENT



CLASSIFICATION OF AMERICAN UNIVERSITIES IN CHINA (POST 1949)



resources from other higher education institutions. The 2003 regulations also require foreign universities to partner with a host Chinese university. Besides ensuring high-quality higher education to boost economic growth, the regulations enable Sino-foreign partnerships for Chinese universities to acquire the infrastructure to become world-class universities in their own right (Yang, 2018).

Notably, 62.5 percent (45) of the universities established after 1949 are microcampuses (jointly administered dual-degree programs), 29.2% (21) are international joint universities, and 5 are branch campuses. Of the 5 branch campuses, 3 are located in Hong Kong, and are thus not required to partner with a Chinese host university.

Rising Chinese interest in the liberal arts overlaps with the rising number of liberal arts programs offered through Sino-foreign partnerships, including partnerships with American universities (Godwin & Pickus, 2017). Chinese students are turning to a more generalized education model offered under the liberal arts because of dissatisfaction with educational and professional outcomes from a more specialized approach, as found in the Soviet model prominent in communist or formerly communist countries.

Liberal arts education provides a broad curriculum that encourages analytical and critical thinking and soft skills — all of which will be more in demand with greater digital advances, automation, and job obsolescence (Cheng & Wei, 2021). It is also the result of the growing ability of Chinese society in not just importing Western-style liberal arts education but also adapting it to suit its distinct socio-cultural needs (Cheng & Wei, 2021; Yang, 2016). Finally, Chinese higher education institutions seek access to liberal arts education curricula in their pursuit to become world-class universities (Yang, 2016).

U.S.-China relations and higher education

The Chinese government routinely monitors and evaluates Sino-foreign partnerships, shutting down programs it considers contrary to public interest or unable to fulfill educational priorities (Yang, 2018). In a recent controversy, Chinese authorities terminated 286 cooperative programs in 2021. This included a social work program by New York University

Shanghai (a partnership of Shanghai's East China Normal University and New York University) (Zhang, 2021).

Rising tensions between the U.S. and China have impacted the higher education relations between the two countries. Examples include the U.S. government's China Initiative that investigated perceived Chinese espionage in American business and research, and the U.S. Senate's decision to deny funding to American universities hosting Confucius Institutes (Guo et al, 2021; Horsley, 2021). The U.S. suspended the Fulbright program with China and Hong-Kong in 2020 in light of the 2019-20 Hong Kong protests, although it is now looking to revive the program (Martin, 2022).

In May 2022, three Chinese universities — Renmin University of China, Lanzhou University, and Nanjing University (which operates the Hopkins-Nanjing Center with Johns Hopkins University) — withdrew from all international rankings. The move comes as China seeks to create world-class universities with Chinese characteristics that are suited to its domestic priorities. A key factor has also been the pressure to contribute to international journals — a major part of international rankings — even as restrictions such as the China Initiative make international research collaborations difficult (Sharma, 2022).

However, there has been little documented impact of rising U.S.-China tensions or contemporary events on American universities operational in China today. A notable exception is Savannah College of Art and Design - Hong Kong. The university shut down after spring 2020, citing concerns about student safety and academic quality following the 2019–20 Hong Kong protests and the COVID-19 pandemic.

Conclusion

It has taken over 80 years for the number of American universities in China to surpass the highest recorded number of American universities in China before 1949 (18 in 1919). Given deteriorating U.S.-China relations, Chinese universities' withdrawal from international rankings amid China's increasingly inward focus, and other geopolitical issues such as the Russian invasion of Ukraine, it remains to be seen what the future of American higher education institutions in China will look like. Scenarios of interest include the impact on (and the future of) Sino-foreign partnerships, American universities' appetite for continued internationalization in the region, and the success of liberal arts education in the Chinese context.

OPERATIONAL AMERICAN UNIVERSITIES IN CHINA, TAIWAN, AND HONG KONG



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