

Committee on Scholarly Communication with China

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中美学术交流委员会

The Committee on Scholarly Communication with the People's Republic of China, known since 1996 as the Committee on Scholarly Communication with China (CSCC), was founded in 1966 and is devoted to fostering and promoting academic relations, research, and exchange programs between American and Chinese students and scholars.

In 1966, the United States National Academy of Sciences (NAS) partnered with the American Council of Learned Societies (ACLS) and the Social Science Research Council (SSRC) to jointly sponsor the Committee on Scholarly Communication with the People's Republic of China (CSCPRC), with a new office in Washington, D.C.

The decision to develop a committee on China came mainly from the NAS, after China successfully detonated an atomic bomb in 1962. This success caught the attention of American scientists and in 1963 the NAS convened to discuss the establishment of a China committee. In an effort to provide American China specialists with access to China and provide better communication among scientists from the two countries, the NAS decided to focus the committee mainly on the natural sciences, though some attention was also paid to the social sciences and the humanities.

The CSCPRC was formed at a time when such communication was not routine. Years of an estranged

relationship finally began to tentatively resolve in the early 1970s, when a visit from President Nixon initiated the United States and the People's Republic of China (PRC) to sign an agreement to amend academic ties nearly a decade after the CSCPRC was formed. However, it was not until long after the Tiananmen Square incident in 1989 that the academic relationship between the two countries developed into the free flowing current of ideas seen today.

The first signs of an improved relationship between the two countries came with President Nixon's visit to China in 1972. The event led to the organization of approximately 67 delegations between the two countries over the course of a month, covering topics mainly in the natural sciences such as herbal pharmacology, linguistics, seismology and early childhood education. Though delegations that focused on the social sciences and the humanities did occur, a greater interest was held with studies in technical and natural sciences. The reports written and published from these delegations marked the beginnings of Chinese research institutes and filled a gap in American knowledge of Chinese science. Also in the 1970s, reassurances from Mao Zedong that Chinese-American scientists were welcome in China helped keep the exchange of people and ideas flowing, and soon US industry leaders Exxon and IBM were openly welcoming Chinese specialists.

As the work of the CSCPRC grew during the 1970s, the idea of reciprocity of ideas and scholars, and eventually of students, was greatly enforced. In 1978 US-China political relations moved more toward normalization and

a proposal was made by President Carter's Science Advisor, Frank Press, to exchange ten students from each country. Vice-Premier Deng Xiaoping then proposed that China send 500 students and scholars to the United States the next year.

The CSCPRC often encountered problems with the exchange of students in early years. The U.S. was denied a centralized office in China to aid in placement of American students, and was forced to go through Chinese agencies like the Ministry of Education (MOE). Finally, in 1986 the Committee received permission from both U.S. and Chinese officials to open an office in Beijing. This new office was sponsored by the Chinese Academy of Science (CAS) and facilitated programs to help coordinate placement of students and scholars in China.

For thirty years the CSCPRC helped develop and foster academic ties between the US and China, and the main responsibility of the committee came from the NAS. In 1996, however, ACLS President Stanley Katz announced that budget restrictions and a decline in private and federal support forced the closure of the Washington, DC office of the CSCPRC, now renamed the Committee on Scholarly Communication with China (CSCC). When the Washington office closed, the Slavic, East European and Asian Reading Room (SEEARR) of the Gelman Library of The George Washington University received the CSCPRC's Washington-branch library as a donation, along with its corresponding non-administrative information files. These information files comprise 96 boxes of material organized by subject-matter and further organized chronologically into colored file folders.

Working out of the Beijing office, the Committee still serves as a link between the NAS and the CAS and, thanks to the Committee's long experience fostering such relations, remains a preferred route for students and

scholars pursuing research and studies in China and in the United States.

The Editors

Further Reading

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