

Stanford Center on
China's Economy and Institutions

ANNUAL REPORT

2021-2022



Stanford

Center on China's Economy
and Institutions

Freeman Spogli Institute

*Stanford Institute for
Economic Policy Research*

SCCEI BY THE NUMBERS

16

Stanford Faculty Affiliates



44

Academic Publications

10

Faculty and Students
Received Research Support



\$525k

Awarded to Support
Faculty Research



35,000+

People Attended Joint Events with Policy
Think Tanks



29

Academic Seminars

9

Major Public Events



3,500+

People Attended
SCCEI Events

33

Media Mentions

37

Students Participated
in Our Summer
Research Internship

65

Undergraduate Students
Enrolled in the Chinese
Economy Course

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LETTER FROM THE DIRECTORS

Dear Friends:

As SCCEI closes out its second year, we are grateful for this opportunity to step back and reflect on how far we have come. This past year has been one of maturation and growth: as we have begun to build out SCCEI's programming—the foundation for future work and research—our Center has begun to take shape right before our eyes. Reaching out to you now, we would like to take a moment to share with you some of our many accomplishments from the last year.

One of our proudest achievements over the last year has been the way we have been able to bring together those on the Stanford campus that do empirical-based research on China.

We bring in the top academics in the world to discuss critical issues related to China that are affecting us in the US today.

At our first annual affiliates meeting in March, 2022, we were delighted to find that we needed three full tables at the Stanford Faculty Club to seat all of our faculty. Indeed, we now have about 16 faculty affiliates—all Stanford faculty members who are actively engaged in high-quality, empirically-based research on China. As we continue to grow and expand, it has been eye-opening to realize how many sharp researchers have been looking for a home base on campus that could foster their ongoing work and incubate their new ideas and budding projects on China. It is a reflection of the many challenges—and the occasionally hostile political environment—facing China researchers that so many scholars seem to be drawn to our Center. We are humbled to be able to fill this need, and look forward to doing even more in the year to come.

Our scholars have been busy over the last year. Despite facing some of China's harshest community lockdowns since 2020, by drawing on strong local partnerships and long-standing collaborations and using new technologies, SCCEI faculty have been able to continue their research inside China despite disruption caused by the pandemic. SCCEI professor Prashant Loyalka continued to conduct first-rate research on China's human capital. His 2021 publication comparing STEM learning among university students in China, India, Russia, and the US continued to be widely covered by mainstream media in the US, and went viral on Chinese social media. In 2022, SCCEI researchers completed the evaluation of a school-based mental health program, concluded a year-long community health worker project in rural communities, published a comprehensive study of China's national parks policies, conducted a ground-breaking study of government censorship on social media, and began a book on the social and political origins of China's current governing structure, among many other projects. We are incredibly proud of these accomplishments, and excited to see where the research will go next.

Beyond the research itself, we are particularly proud of SCCEI's Impact Program, which we see as an unprecedented effort to connect academic scholarship with the policy community. I hope many of you have been receiving our bi-weekly SCCEI China Briefs. These very visual, short-form publications distill insights from academic papers into a two-page synopsis augmented with key takeaways and visualizations designed to make policy relevant insights clear to a lay audience. We have also developed partnerships with leading U.S. think tanks to connect scholars and their work to influential audiences. To date, tens

of thousands of attendees from the policy community have tuned in to our quarterly virtual features, organized with our partners in Washington DC, where we bring in the top academics in the world to discuss the critical issues related to China that are affecting us in the US today. We have also organized many closed-door briefings between faculty and the policy community. Looking ahead to 2023, in January, we are excited to be launching the first-ever Stanford Asia Economic Forum, which will feature the Stanford president and other university leadership, as well as 400 alumni and friends from around the region, and will highlight not only Stanford's commitment to the study of China's economy, but also SCCEI's central role in the broader Stanford community.

Finally, we continue to build up our teaching and mentorship programming, as part of our mission to train the next generation of China scholars. This past year, over 60 Stanford students took our course, Econ 131, China's Economy. More than 120 are already signed up for 2023. Clearly, there is interest in what is happening in China, as well as how China's role in the world affects us and others around the globe. Our Visiting Scholars program also is back to a pre-Covid level. This last year we hosted 15 visitors from Peking University, Zhejiang University, Northeast Normal University and a number of other top schools inside China. Our scholars take courses, collaborate on research, and learn about life in the US. Lastly, we hosted nearly 40 elite high school and college students for an intensive, three-week China research bootcamp program, boasting lectures and workshops from top faculty and scholars. Despite weathering a brutal California heat wave and power outage, our students had a blast living in the dorms and sipping on bubble tea to keep cool, not to mention learning about China's institutions and the research process along the way.

As you read this letter, as well as the annual report to which it is attached, we are inching towards 2023. The world is, if anything, more confusing in a number of different dimensions than in any time in recent years. Despite the uncertainty of the environment within which we are working and studying, this year has been a year of unprecedented growth for SCCEI. We have welcomed new academic staff, expanded our research portfolio, and built new connections with both faculty and policymakers. As a team, we feel the momentum, and are excited for what lies ahead. Of course, all of the achievements that we have described here could never have been accomplished without the support and hard work of our affiliated faculty, generous supporters, and amazing, dedicated staff. We want to express our deepest appreciation to each and every one of you for your support. Our success is built on these collaborations. Let's do more in 2023! There are so many new adventures out there.

Sincerely,



Hongbin Li

Co-Director, Stanford
Center on China's
Economy and
Institutions



Scott Rozelle

Co-Director, Stanford
Center on China's
Economy and
Institutions



Despite the uncertainty of the environment within which we are working and studying, this year has been a year of unprecedented growth for SCCEI.

By the Numbers

16

Stanford Faculty
Affiliates

Academic
Publications

44

8

Faculty Received
Research Support

Awarded to Support Faculty Research

\$525K

1017

People Attended
SCCEI Academic Seminar
Series Events

Research Spotlight: Chinese Attitudes on Social Media

The past few years have seen significant social and political changes in China, including increased international isolation, and widespread community lockdowns as part of China's Zero-Covid policy. However, due to China's tight control over media and civil society, it can be difficult to know exactly how these changes are being viewed and perceived by ordinary citizens in China. To meet this challenge, SCCEI's faculty have launched a new research program that tracks Chinese citizens' attitudes and behaviors on social media, nearly in real time. Led jointly by SCCEI Faculty Affiliates Jennifer Pan and Yiqing Xu, this project uses social media data to create snapshots of the attitudes and views of ordinary Chinese. The new program builds on the team's extensive experience with big data, Chinese social media, government censorship, and cloud computing to offer an unparalleled insight into how on-the-ground attitudes may be changing in response to social and political events.



FLAGSHIP RESEARCH INITIATIVES



SCCEI stimulates research and fosters an environment where diverse perspectives and disciplines related to the study of China's economy can thrive. Our network of faculty affiliates spans a full range of fields and schools across campus, from the Graduate School of Business to the School of Medicine, the School of Engineering, the Law School, and more. All are brought together by a commitment to data-driven research on issues related to China's economy.

SCCEI's multidisciplinary, faculty-led research initiatives comprise collaborative agendas that produce high-quality, empirical analyses, and help inform policy and design innovative solutions to enduring challenges. Our six flagship initiatives cover such critical topics as health, the environment, and political economy and governance, among others.

In addition to these initiatives, SCCEI supports emerging scholars at Stanford through research grants to faculty members and research scholars, capacity and policy engagement grants, and support for conferences and events. Grant recipients over the past year included faculty in political science, sociology, the environment, and economics. Projects covered topics such as measuring the political attitudes of young Chinese, the impact of China's forestry policies and hydropower initiatives, mental health among schoolchildren, and the origins and potential future trajectories of China's current political institutions.

In keeping with SCCEI's mission to serve as a research platform for faculty on campus who work with China, SCCEI also provides in-house staffing and managerial support to its faculty and affiliates. Our network of trained research staff work closely with faculty to provide China-specific research support on an as-needed basis. This includes help with IRB protocol development for China-based projects, English language academic editing services, Chinese-English translation assistance, and advising on international project administration. Our team of academic editors and project managers are all fully bilingual and have extensive experience working with faculty in China.





Impact

One of the most unique and high-profile aspects of SCCEI's work is our commitment to impact. In the past year SCCEI has launched multiple efforts to bridge the gap between academia, the policy community, and the business world:

SCCEI China Briefs

Our China Briefs distill insights from academic papers into a two-page synopsis augmented with key takeaways and visualizations designed to make policy relevant insights clear to a lay audience. SCCEI has published 27 briefs since November, 2021, covering a wide array of important topics such as U.S. China trade, emerging technology, China's governance and economy, and climate change. The briefs reach subscribers in 24 U.S. government agencies and dozens of think tanks around the world, and have been viewed tens of thousands of times.

Think Tank Partnerships

SCCEI has partnered with two leading U.S. think tanks to connect scholars and their work to influential audiences. Both partnerships are structured to inject greater empiricism from data-driven research into important debates about China.

Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS)

SCCEI's flagship collaboration is with the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS), one of Washington's premier think tanks. Together, SCCEI and CSIS launched Big Data China, a standalone collaboration that links SCCEI's academic expertise with CSIS's deep insights into policy debates and the workings of our nation's capital. We co-develop an issue-focused feature once every quarter. SCCEI provides high-quality, data-driven scholarship around the issue area, and CSIS provides the policy perspective and disseminates to key DC influencers via:

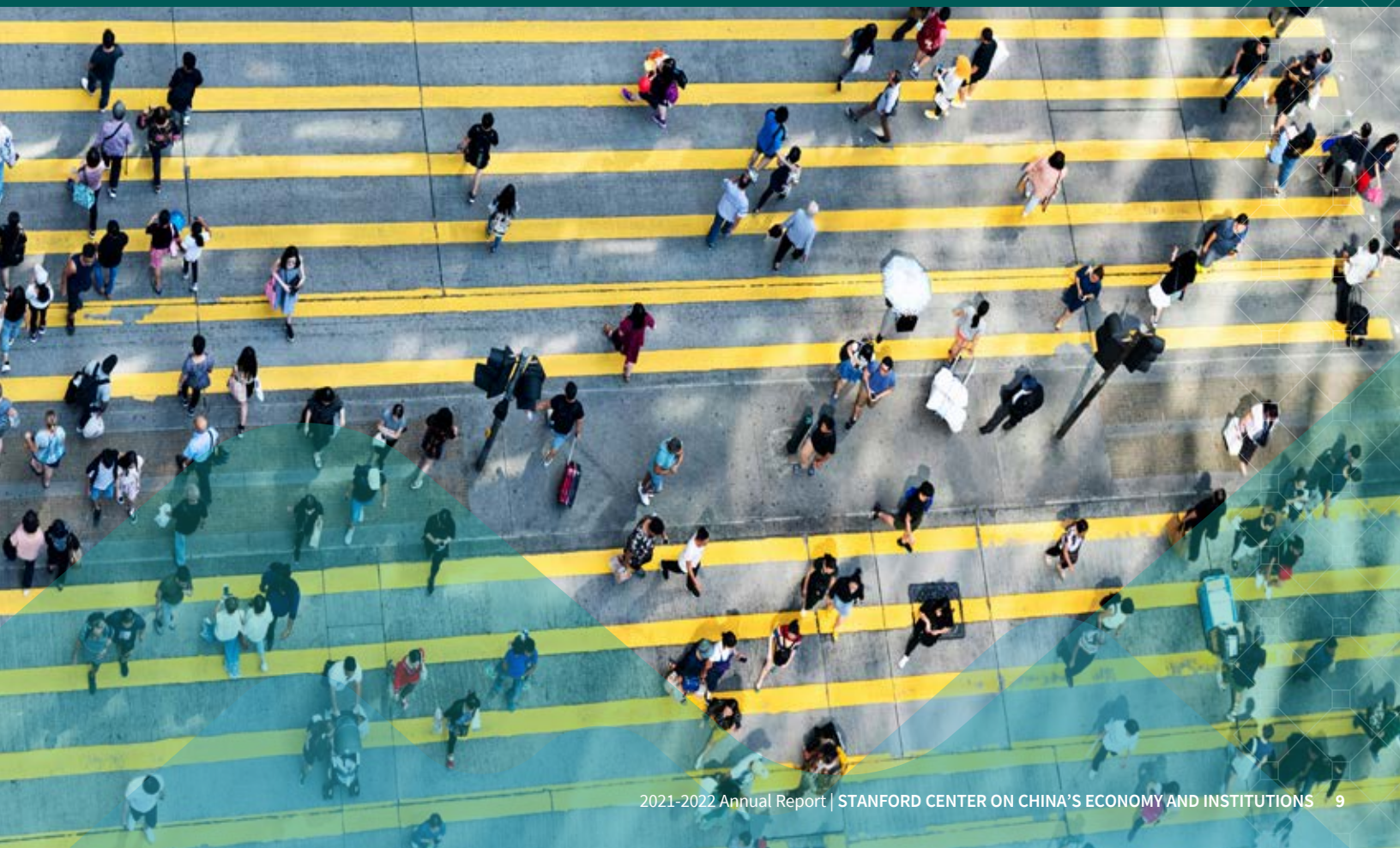
- Quarterly public events featuring China experts from the academic and policy communities
- Closed door briefings between faculty and members of the White House National Security Council, the Department of State, the Department of Defense, and other key government agencies
- A permanent web feature on CSIS's website: <https://bigdatachina.csis.org>

All features highlight the contribution of data-driven scholarship to our understanding of China, and have covered:

- Spectrum of public opinion in China
- China's looming human capital challenge
- Artificial intelligence and US-China technology competition
- The winners and losers in US-China trade
- The impact of bilateral tensions on US-China scientific collaboration

Asia Society Policy Institute, Center for China Analysis

SCCEI also partners with the Center for China Analysis at the Asia Society Policy Institute (ASPI). Together we convene regular roundtables with leading empirical scholars to discuss key features of China's economy, including policy programs like "common prosperity," state-owned enterprises and industrial policy, and the health of its real estate sector. After each closed-door event, we create a report summarizing the key learnings from the exchange and jointly disseminate it to SCCEI's and ASPI's extensive network of opinion-makers and policy leaders.



Events and Engagement

3,500+

Event Attendees

47

SCCEI Events

SCCEI seminars and events provide a venue for researchers, students, policymakers, and private-sector leaders from around the world to exchange ideas, leading to new research activities and policy impact. Our events are motivated by SCCEI's overarching goal of engaging top scholars and policymakers working on issues related to China's economy and institutions. This year, over 3,500 people attended SCCEI events. SCCEI hosts a range of different event types to engage with all segments of our audience.

Academic Seminars

Each quarter we invite faculty from Stanford and around the world to present their empirical research on China's economy to our academic community in an intimate, collaborative workshop setting. All of our speakers are among the top in their fields, working on current contemporary China issues, and base their analysis on high-quality data.

This year we hosted 29 academic seminars covering topics from China's environment, to the usage of tech and AI in China. Here's a selection of topics covered over the year:

- **Joanna Lewis**, Georgetown University, spoke on the "Models of Bilateral Clean Energy Cooperation with China: A Tale of Three Clean Energy Research Centers."
- **Yu Xie**, Princeton University, shared his research on "Economic Inequality and Social and Demographic Outcomes in China."
- **Chuck Eesley**, Stanford University, and Wesley Koo, INSEAD, gave a talk on their joint research, "A Confluence of Tech and Talent: Rural Online Entrepreneurship and Return Migration."
- **Terry Sicular**, Western University (Canada), shared her research on "Catching up with the West: The Emergence of China's Middle Class."

Spotlight Speakers

We organized two large-scale public lectures that brought China experts and academic thought leaders together with our SCCEI community to share their work, research, and experience.

- In the Spring, **Yasheng Huang**, Professor at MIT, addressed an audience of over 200 virtual attendees, speaking on "U.S.-China Relations in the Age of Uncertainty."

China Chats with Stanford Faculty

This series features Stanford faculty presenting their research on China to Stanford alumni in China and worldwide. This year we hosted two events:

- **Eric Hanushek**, the Paul and Jean Hanna Senior Fellow at the Hoover Institution, presented on the development of an achievement database for all of the countries of the world along with estimation of the economic gains from educational improvement with a focus on China.
- **Jennifer Pan**, Professor of Communication and Senior Fellow at the Freeman Spogli Institute for International Studies, presented her research on "Information Flow Between Global and Chinese Social Media."

Stanford China Economic Forum

SCCEI partners with the Stanford Graduate School of Business and the Stanford Institute for Economic Policy Research to host the annual Stanford China Economic Forum bringing together scholars, business leaders, and other change-makers to promote dialogue, an open exchange of ideas, and collaboration. Nearly 600 people tuned in to the virtual forum in November, 2021 to hear from several distinguished scholars and business leaders including:

- **Marc Tessier-Lavigne**, President of Stanford University;
- **Fuqiang Yang**, Senior Advisor of Climate Change and Energy Transition Program at Institute of Energy, Peking University;
- **Fan Bao**, Chairman and CEO of China Renaissance;
- **Yi Cui**, Director of Precourt Institute for Energy, Stanford University.

IN THE NEWS

SCCEI faculty have produced an astounding amount of research that has caught the eye of journalists and media outlets publishing around the world. Media mentions are another way our scholars amplify their research findings and impact change-makers in the political sphere, academic community, and beyond. Our scholars have been highlighted in over 33 articles, podcasts, and news features in the 2021-2022 academic year.

Here are examples of media mentions from the past year:

- **Gretchen Daily** was honored by the British Ecological Society (BES) and was awarded an honorary membership, the highest honor given by BES, recognizing exceptional contribution at an international level to the generation, communication and promotion of ecological knowledge and solutions.
- **Hongbin Li**'s research on "The Rise of Robots in China" has been featured in global media outlets including *China Business Review*.
- **Prashant Loyalka**'s research "The Hidden Cost of Worker Turnover: Attributing Product Reliability to the Turnover of Factory Workers" made headlines and was covered by several media outlets.
- **Scott Rozelle**'s book, *Invisible China: How the Urban-Rural Divide Threatens China's Rise* continues to generate global media attention and was named one of the best books of 2021 by *The Economist*.





Providing Opportunities for Students

Student engagement and education together form one of SCCEI's main strategic pillars: we prepare the next generation of China experts by providing curricular and experiential opportunities that deepen their understanding of issues, opportunities, and possible solutions to the challenges of China's economic development.

Annual Summer Internship

For the first time in two years, SCCEI was able to host an in-person summer internship! Our team worked with 27 student interns on seven different SCCEI research projects ranging from understanding the developmental challenges children face in rural China to finding policy solutions for China's national parks. Along the way, they built up their China chops by taking part in roundtable discussions with China experts, and attending a series of college-level skill building workshops, all preparing them to conduct data-driven field research.

Beyond our research bootcamp, we also connected 10 bright high school students from across the globe with SCCEI partners in China for a hands-on field experience in Western China. After working with our research partners, the students were then virtually mentored by SCCEI faculty and researchers who taught them how to analyze their data and articulate their findings.



Postdoctoral Research Scholars

SCCEI recruits and funds postdoctoral scholars in fields related to the study of China's economy. Our postdoctoral scholars work directly with faculty to further their research investigations and are offered opportunities to audit courses, strengthen their quantitative and regional expertise, build connections with Stanford faculty, and take advantage of the rich and multitudinous resources offered both by SCCEI and by Stanford University. We are proud that our past postdocs have moved on to faculty and professional positions in the US, Asia, and Europe.

Graduate Student Research Funding

SCCEI also supports innovative graduate student research. This year SCCEI supported two PhD students studying under Stanford faculty affiliates. Their research looks at China's new social credit system and promotion pathways within China's government bureaucracy.

Teaching

With an ever-connected and globalized world, it is important that the next generation is prepared to work with and understand the rising economic global players. SCCEI encourages more teaching on China, particularly through an economic lens. Our faculty and faculty affiliates all have strong teaching experiences and a proven record of offering high quality courses on issues related to the economics of China. In Spring 2022, SCCEI co-directors Hongbin Li and Scott Rozelle taught their popular undergraduate course, The Chinese Economy. Our faculty also offer courses on global education, as well as censorship and propaganda.

Visiting Student Researchers

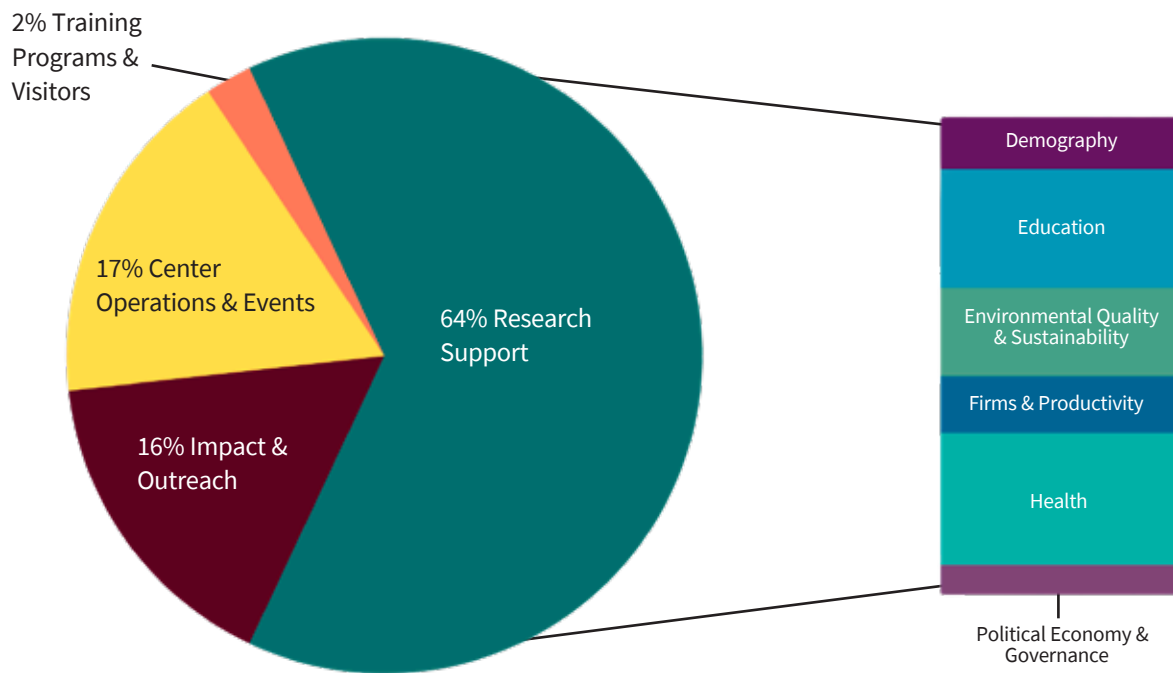
Each year we invite a select group of students and scholars from key affiliate universities to visit and study at SCCEI, typically for a full academic year. This partnership fosters cross-organizational communication, and forms connections and trust across international lines. As travel restrictions were lifted, we were thrilled to be able to welcome our latest group of visiting student researchers, who had been patiently and eagerly waiting to join our team.

Upon their arrival, each student is paired with a SCCEI researcher and faculty member who act as mentors to the students as they conduct research and write papers using SCCEI data.

Financial Overview

SCCEI is grateful to our generous supporters who make it possible for our team and affiliates to consistently innovate in research and training, and to help inform policies and practices related to China. Looking ahead, we intend to continue our support for faculty and student research and experiential learning opportunities. Below is an overview of SCCEI's revenue and expenses for the fiscal year 2021-22.

FY22 Expenditure Breakdown



Our Team

Directors

Hongbin Li
Scott Rozelle

Center Faculty

Prashant Loyalka

Faculty Affiliates

Gretchen Daily
Gary Darmstadt
Chuck Eesley
Karen Eggleston
Larry Goulder
Ann Hsing
Matthew Kohrman
Grant Miller
Jean Oi
Jennifer Pan
Joseph Piotroski
Xinshu She
Manpreet Singh
Andrew Walder
Yiqing Xu
Xueguang Zhou

Research Scholars

Yue Ma
Huan Wang

Postdoctoral Scholars

Dorien Emmers
Tong Liu
Yiwei Qian
Hao Xue
Wei Yan

Core Staff

Matthew Boswell
Jennifer Choo
Ronda Fenton
Alexis Medina
Heather Rahimi
Tina Shi
Xinmin Zhao

Project Staff

Cody Abbey
Claire Cousineau
Sarah-Eve Dill
Cindy Feng
Yian Guo
Tom Kennedy
Lucy Pappas
Andrew Rule

The background of the entire page is a repeating pattern of overlapping circles in two shades of red, creating a geometric, tessellated effect.

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