

Stanford

Center on China's Economy
and Institutions

Freeman Spogli Institute

*Stanford Institute for
Economic Policy Research*

STANFORD CENTER ON CHINA'S ECONOMY AND INSTITUTIONS

ANNUAL REPORT

2023-2024



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LETTER FROM THE DIRECTORS

Dear Friends:

This past year, SCCEI has embraced change, growth, and a renewed commitment to excellence. In our efforts to establish a leading China center, we've navigated today's geopolitical complexities, a fast-evolving Chinese economy, and society's pressing need for in-depth China expertise. With limited resources, we have chosen quality over quantity, reforming existing programs and launching new, high-impact initiatives. Our reimagined SCCEI seminar series, inaugural SCCEI China Conference, and first-ever Summer Study Program are testaments to our dedication to generating unmatched insights on China and strengthening our impact within Stanford and beyond.

Our reformed SCCEI seminar series has likely become the premier global platform for interdisciplinary discussions on China's economy, politics, history, media, and society. By appointing three young Stanford scholars—Jennifer Pan, Yiqing Xu, and Huan Wang—to lead the series, we brought a fresh perspective to the seminars, which has yielded substantial results. Leading experts from Harvard, MIT, Columbia, Princeton, and the University of Hong Kong joined us, drawn by the series' unique interdisciplinary focus and in-person setting. This approach attracts China scholars from diverse fields, fostering discussions on critical topics such as pharmaceutical regulation and innovation, digital surveillance during COVID-19, technology transfer and the explosive growth of China's automobile sector, and the US-China trade war's impact on housing markets. The seminars have consistently drawn a full-house—including Stanford faculty, scholars, students, and visitors—who contribute to a vibrant, cross-disciplinary community of intellectual exchange.

The success of our inaugural SCCEI China Conference has been noted by experts, including Harvard Professor Yuhua Wang, who called it “the best China conference,” and Ambassador Laura Stone, who hailed it as “the best event at Stanford.” Held in May as an invite-only event, the conference brought together about two-dozen expert panelists for off-the-record discussions on China's most pressing issues, offering a quantitative social science perspective on China and U.S.-China relations. The event attracted an audience of scholars, students, Silicon Valley experts, and business leaders, and featured a keynote by Craig Allen, President of the US-China Business Council, which has since been viewed online over 23,000 times. University of Toronto Professor Loren Brandt reflected, “It was a great set of panels that nicely linked with each other and offered an opportunity to interact with people I usually don't get to see.”

In June 2024, we launched the inaugural Summer Study Program to inspire

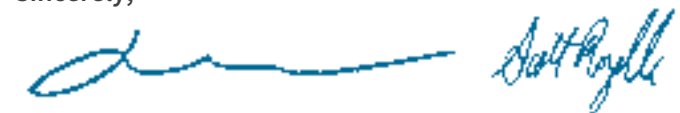
“Our achievements could not have been accomplished without the support and hard work of our affiliated faculty, generous supporters, and dedicated staff. We want to express our deepest appreciation to each and every one of you.”

the next generation of global thinkers, leading 16 Stanford undergraduates on a two-week immersive learning journey across seven cities in China. Guided by SCCEI faculty, students engaged directly with China's varied landscapes and sectors, from rural townships to tech giants like Ant Finance, Luckin Coffee, and Xiaomi EV factory. The program offered a firsthand look at topics like education, healthcare, technology, environment, and manufacturing, complemented by interactions with top academic, industry, and government figures, including U.S. Ambassador Nicholas Burns. Reflecting on the program, students highlighted the “remarkable opportunity to see parts of China that otherwise wouldn't be accessible” and the experience's “profound impact on [their] global perspective.” This Summer Study Program has set the stage for future cohorts, underscoring SCCEI's commitment to transformative educational experiences in China.

Looking ahead, we anticipate another transformative year at SCCEI, marked by key initiatives and exciting growth. A major milestone will be adding new faculty to the SCCEI team, further strengthening Stanford lineup of high-caliber faculty in China studies and expanding our research focal areas. The 2024-25 year also celebrates the inaugural Skyline Scholars program, welcoming distinguished scholars like Gangsheng Bao (Fudan University), Loren Brandt (University of Toronto), Quanxi Gao (Shanghai Jiaotong University), Yasheng Huang (MIT), Shaoda Wang (University of Chicago), and Xiaonian Xu (CEIBS), to engage with our community. We have also launched our second research program, China Labor Income and Population (CLIP), which builds on the success of REAP, our first program. As we move forward, SCCEI will continue to expand faculty-led research programs, supporting a diverse array of perspectives on China's dynamic landscape across multiple disciplines.

All of the achievements we have described here could not have been accomplished without the support and hard work of our affiliated faculty, generous supporters, and dedicated staff. We want to express our deepest appreciation to each and every one of you for your support. Our success is made possible by your collaboration.

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



OUR MISSION

The Stanford Center on China's Economy and Institutions is Stanford's home for empirical, multidisciplinary research on China's economy. We aim to foster path-breaking research, create transformative student experiences, and advance public understanding of China's economy and its impact on the world.

RESEARCH

Leveraging strengths across multiple disciplines, we bring together scholars from Stanford and around the world to create a vibrant research community dedicated to conducting empirical analyses of China's economy.

EDUCATION

We serve as a hub for Stanford students interested in China, providing curricular and experiential opportunities that deepen their understanding of issues, opportunities, and possible solutions to the challenges of China's economic development.

IMPACT

SCCEI brings data to the discussion by distilling practical insights from our research and disseminating them to partners in government, the research community, civil society, the private sector, and the general public.

FACULTY RESEARCH

SCCEI stimulates data-driven 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, Humanities and Sciences, 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.



Photo: Xinmin Zhao

Faculty Research Funding

SCCEI supports innovative faculty research in the form of research support. We recognize that it is increasingly difficult for researchers to access funding for China research, and aim to fill that gap via competitive faculty research grants. This year **SCCEI provided over \$100,000 in financial support to faculty** from schools across Stanford, all of whom are using innovative datasets to explore issues related to China’s economy.

Research Spotlight: China Labor, Income, and Population Program

This summer SCCEI launched our second official research program: the China Labor, Income, and Population (CLIP) research program. Led by SCCEI faculty co-director Hongbin Li, **CLIP aims to explore China’s labor market, income, and demographic shifts** to provide a deeper understanding of their implications for China’s economic landscape. CLIP researchers will employ both field surveys and big data to study the complexities of China’s labor market, education and population dynamics and their roles in the Chinese economy. CLIP’s findings will not only benefit academic scholars and policy-makers, but also international stakeholders who seek to better understand China’s role in the global economy.

Skyline Scholars

In February 2024, we launched the Skyline Scholars Program, SCCEI’s flagship initiative designed to empower and elevate distinguished scholars and public figures whose expertise focuses on China’s economy and institutions. **The program attracts leading experts by offering Stanford-based appointments** of up to 12 months, during which they participate in community engagement, contribute to multidisciplinary dialogue, and broaden the scope of data-driven research surrounding the development and transition of China’s economy and society. This spring, a committee of Stanford faculty members nominated scholars from across the world for the inaugural cohort. Skyline Scholars are nominated and selected based on their academic achievements, public contributions, and potential to make a significant impact. In Fall 2024, we welcomed the first cohort of Skyline Scholars!

Visiting Scholars Program

The Visiting Scholars Program at SCCEI appoints distinguished scholars and researchers from top universities and institutions worldwide, with a specialized focus on China’s economy and institutions. The program is designed to create a dynamic environment that fosters collaboration and the exchange of knowledge between leading experts in the field. This year **we hosted 15 visiting scholars**: six visiting student researchers, two visiting postdoctoral scholars, and seven visiting faculty and research scholars.

SCCEI Seminar Series

The SCCEI Seminar Series serves as a platform to connect and establish a global network of leading scholars focusing on China’s economy. This year, **SCCEI hosted eight leading scholars** hailing from Harvard University, Columbia University, University of California San Diego, Princeton University, University of Hong Kong, University of Chicago, University of British Columbia, and Massachusetts Institute of Technology. The speakers covered a wide range of pressing issues in China’s development, such as the impact of rural clan societies on the rise of communism, regulation and innovation in the pharmaceutical industry, the effects of digital surveillance during COVID-19, and the economic repercussions of the US-China trade war on housing markets. The seminars consistently attracted large audiences and generated in-depth and enthusiastic discussions, underscoring the vital role the series plays in advancing the study of China’s economy and institutions and strengthening intellectual connections within the academic community.



Photo: Xinmin Zhao

Jin Wang, 2023-24 Visiting Scholar and Hong Kong University of Science and Technology Professor reflected on her time at Stanford, “I have greatly benefited from being a part of [SCCEI’s] research community. The numerous high-quality seminars and workshops, engaging scholars and staff, academic facilities, as well as the resources provided by SCCEI, have been invaluable.”

“It was a fantastic experience, and I really appreciate the chance to connect with everyone personally. I obtained lots of insightful comments and feedback from great minds.”

— **XU XU**, ASSISTANT PROFESSOR OF POLITICS AND INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS, PRINCETON UNIVERSITY; SEMINAR SPEAKER

IMPACT AND ENGAGEMENT

Our events are motivated by SCCEI’s mission to advance public understanding of China’s economy and its impact on the world. SCCEI events provide a venue for researchers, students, policymakers, and private-sector leaders from around the world to collaborate and learn from one another, often leading to new research activities and policy impact.



Photos: Rod Searcey
Xinmin Zhao

Lectures and Special Events

In September 2023, **Yasheng Huang**, Professor of Global Economics and Management at the MIT Sloan School of Management, shared lessons from history, the rise and fall of technology in Chinese history, to an engaged audience of over 100 faculty, students, and community members.

Albert Park, Chief Economist of the Asian Development Bank, presented on China’s economy and Asia’s rise in a co-sponsored event with SIEPR and the King Center.

Public figure and economic historian Professor **Qin Hui** delivered a lecture on *Misalignment in the Exchange of Ideas between China and the West*.

In February 2024, over 100 guests attended a welcome reception and discussion with **Mark Lambert**, the US State Department China Coordinator, focused on US-China relations in an era of strategic competition.

In an event co-sponsored by Stanford Libraries and SCCEI, **Bo Li**, Deputy Managing Director at the IMF, expressed his concerns on the global climate crisis and shared insights on the macroeconomic impacts of climate change and steps to mitigate the worst of the crisis.

Minxin Pei, Professor of Government and Fellow at Claremont McKenna College, discussed how China spies on its people during a special lecture on his newly released book, *The Sentinel State: Surveillance and the Survival of Dictatorship in China*.



Photo: Rod Searcey



120k

CHINA BRIEF READS

70+

SCCEI-HOSTED EVENTS

13

LECTURES AND SPECIAL EVENTS

24

HIGH-IMPACT CHINA BRIEFS

2

CHINA-FOCUSED CONFERENCES

IMPACT AND ENGAGEMENT

SCCEI China Briefs

This year, SCCEI reviewed nearly 300 new empirical papers on China, selecting 24 high-impact, policy-relevant papers for its China Brief series. **The biweekly digest reached 120,000 reads** over the summer, including audiences in over 30 executive branch offices, key House and Senate committees, major business associations, and top Washington think tanks.

The series continues to illuminate critical issues in China’s economic, social, and political landscape, such as:

- The interplay between the state and private enterprise in China
- China’s trade policies
- China’s judicial reform
- Talent flows in China and between the US and China

Expert Panels and Reports

SCCEI produced multiple joint events and reports with the Center for Strategic and International Studies and the Asia Society Policy Institute’s Center for China Analysis this year. In keeping with our mission to elevate the profile of data-driven academic scholarship on China, **this programming regularly reaches audiences in the tens of thousands.** Topics covered in 2023-24 included:

- China’s green transition
- China’s demographic challenges
- The challenges of accurately measuring China’s economic performance
- Changing perceptions of opportunity and social mobility in China

REAP Conference on Early Childhood Development

In Spring 2024, the Rural Education Action Program organized and co-sponsored a multi-day conference based in Shanghai, China. Through rounds of presentations and panel discussions, **over 150 academics** including global early childhood development (ECD) experts, NGO professionals, and government officials gathered to learn about and discuss the most pressing issues related to ECD in China, as well as the impact and lessons learned from ECD interventions conducted recently, forging a roadmap for upscaling ECD initiatives on a national level.

“Best China conference I’ve been to.”

— YUHUA WANG, PROFESSOR OF GOVERNMENT, HARVARD UNIVERSITY; CONFERENCE PANELIST

“Best event during my year at Stanford.”

— AMBASSADOR LAURA STONE; CONFERENCE ATTENDEE



Inaugural SCCEI China Conference

In May, SCCEI launched its inaugural annual China Conference. The invite-only event aimed to bring empirical scholarship on China from the quantitative social sciences to the forefront of debates about China and U.S.-China relations. Over the course of the conference, **over 20 panelists engaged in a lively, off-the-record exchange** with an audience of scholars and students from across campus as well as experts and business leaders from Silicon Valley. The public **keynote address by Craig Allen**, President of the US-China Business Council, has been viewed online 23 thousand times.

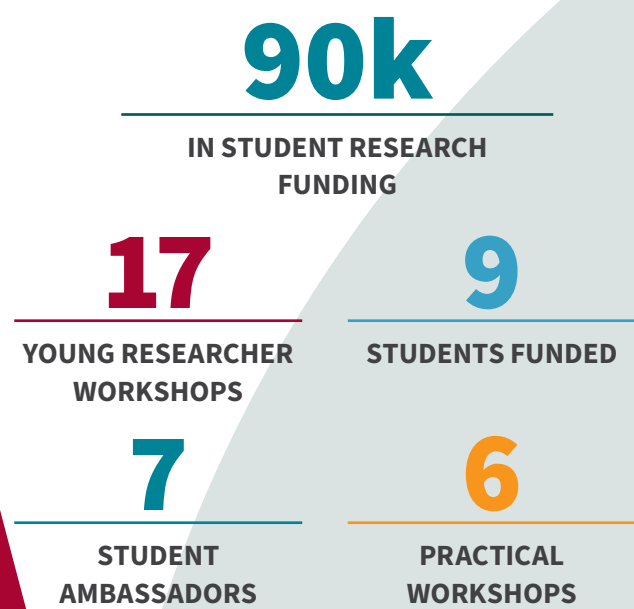
“It was a great set of panels that nicely linked with each other. It also offered an opportunity to interact with people I usually don’t get to see.”

— LOREN BRANDT, PROFESSOR OF ECONOMICS, UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO; CONFERENCE PANELIST



STUDENT OPPORTUNITIES

Student engagement and education form one of SCCEI’s main strategic pillars: we prepare the next generation of China experts by building a community of graduate students working on or in China. We provide practical support in the form of travel funding, fieldwork support, presentation opportunities, and networking with other China experts across campus. This year we focused on expanding our student programming to include events, funding, and new learning opportunities for burgeoning young scholars.



Teaching & Mentoring

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 Winter 2024, SCCEI co-directors Hongbin Li and Scott Rozelle taught their popular undergraduate course, The Chinese Economy, reaching over 150 undergraduate students. This year SCCEI Faculty Affiliate **Yiqing Xu, Assistant Professor in Political Science, also launched a new course on Chinese Politics & Society**, which included a combination of directed readings and weekly public lectures by top China scholars from around campus, each offering an evidence-based perspective on institutions and trends shaping modern China.

Our bi-weekly **Young Researcher Workshops** also offer young China scholars an opportunity to engage directly with interdisciplinary faculty and peers from across campus to discuss and receive feedback on their research. Each workshop features a different graduate student or postdoc presenting their latest empirical findings on issues related to China’s economy. This year’s topics have included results from a randomized controlled trial of child nutrition, pathways of bureaucratic mobility, and links between AI and censorship. Faculty and senior scholars provide comments and feedback for improvement. This event series helps to build and strengthen Stanford’s community of young researchers working on China.

Student Ambassadors Program

To increase our outreach and connection with graduate students working on China, SCCEI launched the SCCEI Student Ambassadors Program, bringing together graduate student representatives from seven different schools and departments around campus. Students meet quarterly to build connections, offer perspectives on making SCCEI programming accessible and relevant to graduate students, and help to extend SCCEI’s outreach within their individual departments.

Graduate Student Research Funding

After extensive review and a competitive selection process, **SCCEI awarded nearly \$90,000 in financial support to graduate students from across campus** to pursue their intended research projects. This year for the first time SCCEI’s graduate student support included competitive fellowships to doctoral students working on dissertation research related to China. This financial support allows students to “buy out” of teaching obligations and allows them to focus fully on their research. All SCCEI award recipients have the added opportunity to present their research at one of SCCEI’s Young Researcher Workshops.

Practical Workshops

Conducting research in or on China increasingly involves a complicated package of research administration, including navigating bureaucracies on both sides of the Pacific. To help students meet these challenges, SCCEI launched a series of practical workshops for graduate students, offering tips and tricks for ensuring a smooth research process. Topics this past year included a hands-on workshop on preparing a study for ethical review, how to prepare a field budget, and tips for Stanford’s complex contracting process. We are also proud to have organized and hosted the **first ever cross-campus panel discussion on China research administration**, bringing together China research administrators from the University Privacy Office, Information Security Office, Global Risk Office, Dean of Research, and Global Engagement Review Program to discuss how their offices work together to approve China-based research, and to field questions from faculty and students engaged in China-based research.

2023-24 Student Fellowship Recipients



THOMAS CAO
Graduate School of Business
Research Topic:
“The Interaction of Propaganda and Censorship in China”



TIAN XIE
School of Law
Research Topic:
“Exploring the Role of Party Committees in Chinese Companies”

Photo: Xinmin Zhao

SCCEI SUMMER STUDY PROGRAM

SCCEI launched its inaugural Summer Study Program in June 2024, leading **16 Stanford undergraduates** on a two-week immersive learning program in China.

Under SCCEI faculty guidance, students visited **7 cities across urban and rural China** and participated in field excursions to internationally renowned companies, like Ant Finance, Luckin Coffee, and Xiaomi, as well as visits to factory floors and medical clinics in rural townships.

During the program, the students not only studied diverse topics like education, healthcare, technology, environment, and manufacturing, they also **engaged with top academic, industry, and policy leaders, including the U.S. Ambassador to China, Nicholas Burns**. The experience has left a lasting impression on the program participants, and SCCEI is eager to continue facilitating transformative student exchanges in China through this innovative Summer Study Program.



Photo: Xinmin Zhao



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MESSAGES FROM THE FIELD

Stanford undergraduate students reflect on their time in China during the inaugural Summer Study Program.

“I think this trip has fundamentally reshaped my global perspective...it has altered my perception in a way that’s constructive, in a way that’s helping me think more critically about the information that’s being fed to me.” — RAHUL AJMERA, ECONOMICS STUDENT

“It was incredible talking to people in very high positions of power in these digital companies we took tours of.” — ARSHIA MEHTA, MANAGEMENT SCIENCE AND ENGINEERING STUDENT

“Everybody wanted their children to go to college, everybody wanted to see a better future...that reminds me – no matter how distant we seem politically, people are actually very similar.” — GARRETT MALLOY, POLITICAL SCIENCE STUDENT

“This is a really remarkable opportunity to see parts of China that otherwise wouldn’t be accessible to me.” — STELLA MEIER, INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS STUDENT



FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

Expenses

| | |
|--------------------------------------|--------------------|
| Core Faculty Support | \$1,331,087 |
| Staff Support | \$1,816,151 |
| Operations, Events, & Communications | \$132,816 |
| Impact Program | \$313,152 |
| Student & Community Engagement | \$147,892 |
| Faculty & Student Research Funding | \$304,437 |
| Visitors Program | \$14,584 |
| Indirect Costs | \$174,951 |
| Total | \$4,235,070 |

Funding

| | |
|----------------------------------|--------------------|
| Endowment Payout | \$1,940,279 |
| Expendable Gifts | \$2,282,510 |
| Designated Funds & Other Revenue | \$12,281 |
| Total | \$4,235,070 |

Gifts and Support

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. For more information about working with us to enhance China-related research initiatives at Stanford, please visit sccei.fsi.stanford.edu/giving.

OUR TEAM

Directors

Hongbin Li
Scott Rozelle

Faculty Steering Committee

Hongbin Li
Grant Miller
Jennifer Pan
Scott Rozelle
Xueguang Zhou

Center Faculty

Prashant Loyalka
Jennifer Pan

Faculty Affiliates

Nicholas Bloom
Gretchen Daily
Gary Darmstadt
Charles Eesley
Karen Eggleston
Thomas Fingar
Lawrence Goulder
Eric Hanushek
Zhiguo He
Matthew Kohrman
Stephen Luby
Matteo Maggiori
Curtis Milhaupt

Grant Miller
Jean Oi
Joseph Piotroski
Daniel Schwartz
Xinshu She
Hui Qi Tong
Andrew Walder
Kuang Xu
Yiqing Xu
Xueguang Zhou

Research Scholars

Yue Ma
Lingsheng Meng
Huan Wang
Guoguang Wu
Chenggang Xu

Postdoctoral Scholars

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Xinyao Qiu
Xueping Sun
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**STANFORD CENTER ON CHINA'S
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