

THE BIG PICTURE

Studying Abroad

A growing number of American colleges and universities have formed joint ventures to operate in China — despite the risks.

BY HANNAH REALE — NOVEMBER 8, 2020



Duke Kunshan University's campus, pictured above, opened to students in 2014.

Credit: Crcolas, [Creative Commons](#)

There is an ever-growing fear among some United States officials that Beijing's influence is reaching into American universities. For U.S. schools with campuses in China, it's a far less theoretical question.

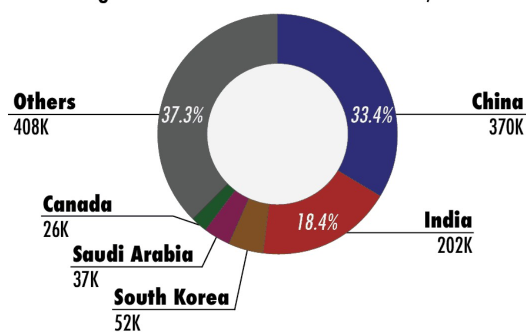
This week, *The Wire* explores American college and university joint ventures in China — from Juilliard School's [new campus](#) in Tianjin to Duke University's new 200-acre campus in the city of Kunshan.

Coming to America

Soon after President Nixon's opening to China in the 1970s, large numbers of Chinese students began attending American colleges and universities. Today, in fact, China is the largest source of international students at American colleges and universities. According to the Institute for International Education, there were nearly 370,000 students from China enrolled in American colleges and universities during the 2018-2019 academic year, the last year for which figures are available.

But quietly, during the past decade, something surprising has happened: America's institutions of higher education — spurred on by growing demand from China for American-style education and seeking new sources of revenue — have ventured into China. They have established research outposts, alumni centers, and in some cases, established degree granting branch campuses in China, typically through joint ventures with Chinese government run institutions.

Origins of U.S. International Students, 2019

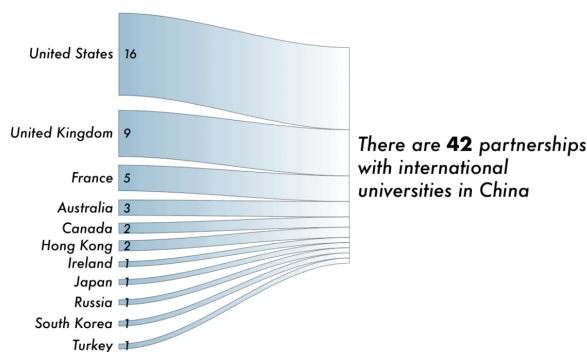


Nearly 1.1 million international students studied in the United States in 2019. Over a third were from China.

Data: [Institute of International Education](#)

American Universities Go Abroad

Going global with branch campuses is not unique to China. Colleges and universities across the globe have opened about 306 overseas branch campuses — where schools from one country open a branch in another country — up from about 249 in 2016. American universities have, by far, the most overseas campuses (86) or about twice as many as the United Kingdom. And the largest number of American campuses are based in China and Hong Kong: 16, according to the Cross-Border Education Research Team (C-BERT).



There are **42** partnerships with international universities in China

The United States has more educational endeavors in China than any other country.

Data: [C-BERT](#)

In 2013, for instance, New York University opened a satellite campus in Shanghai, NYU Shanghai, jointly founded by East China Normal University. It now has more than 1,500 students enrolled. Duke University has also set up a satellite campus in a venture with Wuhan University called Duke Kunshan University, in Jiangsu Province, in between the cities of Shanghai and Suzhou. The first phase of the school's 200-acre campus has already opened and enrolled more than 1,000 students. Also, the famed Juilliard School of Music — which has enrolled a growing numbers of students from Asia — opened its own Chinese campus this fall, in the northern port city of Tianjin.

The schools are not cheap: Duke Kunshan's tuition, supplies, and living expenses total \$67,475.

Of course, some of America's elite universities, particularly from the Ivy League, have proceeded more cautiously. Why? Some administrators have said they fear it could be difficult to maintain academic standards at a satellite campus; others have expressed concerns about academic freedom in a country that restricts free speech, censors public discourse and arrests dissidents (See how Cornell University [cut ties](#) with a Chinese university over academic freedom). So instead, schools like Harvard, Yale, the [University of Chicago](#) and

Stanford have opted for research and engagement centers — for now. It’s a kind of wait and test attitude, allowing the schools to send faculty, recruit and engage with overseas alumni.

Foreign colleges and universities need to be licensed to operate in China and they are required to have a joint venture partner, typically a state university. The arrangements, though, vary. Some American schools grant dual degrees in China, while others are set up so that a student receive separate degrees from the two partners — one American, the other Chinese. The structure of the branch campuses vary. Some require students to spend time on the U.S. campus while others do not.

Of course, the dynamics of these satellite campuses could be affected by politics. Under Xi Jinping, for instance, China has tightened oversight over Chinese universities, limiting the use of foreign textbooks, making the Communist Party’s ideology more prominent and sacking scholars who challenge or defy the Party — moves that could have spillover affects on American-backed schools in China.

At the same time, back in the United States, the federal law enforcement authorities have targeted China’s Thousand Talents program, and the threat they believe is posed by Chinese researchers stealing secrets from American universities and research institutions. How that — and a growing technology battle between the two countries — will affect American institutions based in China is unclear.

What follows are details about the branch campuses that American colleges and universities have established in China.

U.S. Branch Campuses in China

Institution Name	U.S. University	Chinese Partner	Degree Granting?	Year Est.	Location	Description
Duke Kunshan University	Duke University	Wuhan University	Yes	2014	Kunshan, Jiangsu	DKU offers both a bachelor’s degree program, which began in 2018, and opportunities for students to spend part of their time at Duke abroad.
Georgia Tech Tianjin University Shenzhen Institute	Georgia Tech	Shenzhen Virtual University Park	Yes	2014	Shenzhen, Guangdong	Georgia Tech offers several Master’s programs in Shenzhen and a joint PhD program with Peking University and Georgia-based Emory University in Beijing. The university also has a campus in France, and centers in Panama and Singapore.
Hopkins-Nanjing Center for Chinese and American Studies	Johns Hopkins University	Nanjing University	Yes	1986	Nanjing	One of the primary goals of the Hopkins-Nanjing Center is teaching Mandarin as students pursue a Masters degree — unlike many of its peers, which teach entirely in English.
Tianjin Conservatory of Music Juilliard Graduate School	The Juilliard School	Tianjin Conservatory of Music, Tianjin Innovative Finance Investment LLC	Yes	2020	Tianjin, China	The Ministry of Education-accredited institution offers Masters degrees in the arts. It’s the most recent institution to open and deepen the U.S.-China educational ties.
Wenzhou-Kean University	Kean University	Wenzhou University	Yes	2011	Wenzhou	MOE-accredited WKU offers Bachelor’s degrees in a range of subjects.
The University of Chicago Francis and Rose Yuen Campus	The University of Chicago	The Hong Kong Jockey Club	Yes	2018	Hong Kong	The University. of Chicago offers an executive MBA program as well as courses that do not count towards any particular degree. UChicago also has international centers in London, Delhi, Beijing, and Paris.
LNU-MSU College of International Business	Missouri State University	Liaoning Normal University	Yes	2000	Dalian	Students at LNU-MSU can get an Associate’s degree, and then complete a Bachelor’s degree at the school or transfer to Missouri State to finish their degree.
New York University, Shanghai	New York University	East China Normal University, City of Shanghai	Yes	2012	Shanghai	NYU-Shanghai is NYU’s third degree-granting campus — the other two are in New York and Abu Dhabi. NYU has an additional 12 campuses that don’t offer degrees in places such as Paris, Tel Aviv, and Buenos Aires.

Tsinghua-UC Berkeley Shenzhen Institute	University of California – Berkeley	Tsinghua University, Shenzhen municipal government	Yes	2014	Nanshan, Shenzhen	The institute offers a dual-degree Masters program that requires students to study at both the Nanshan and California campuses.
The UM-SJTU Joint Institute	University of Michigan	Shanghai Jiao Tong University	Yes	2006	Shanghai	The institute offers two undergraduate programs in engineering and is ABET accredited.
Sichuan University, Pittsburgh Institute	University of Pittsburgh	Sichuan University	No	2015	Jiang'an, Chengdu	SCUPI houses several undergraduate programming options that may bring students to study in Pittsburgh for part of their education in order to receive a dual degree. Students who spend four years at SCUPI will graduate with a Bachelor's from Sichuan University.
University of Upper Iowa, Hong Kong	Upper Iowa University	Unknown	Yes	2015	Hong Kong	Programming offered through UIU-HK is primarily courses that do not lead to any degree, but the HK campus also offers an online MBA program. The Hong Kong campus is one of 23 locations that UIU advertises on its website.
Fort Hays State University (Liaoning)	Fort Hays State University	Sias University, Shenyang Normal University	Yes	2000	Xinzheng, Henan, Shenyang, Liaoning	With its two partner universities, Fort Hays offers dual Bachelor's degrees, though it has no independent campus of its own.
New York Institute of Technology	New York Institute of Technology	Communication University of China Nanjing University of Posts and Telecommunications Tongji University Shandong Technology and Business University Jiangxi University of Finance and Economics	Yes	2015	Beijing Nanjing Shanghai Shenzhen Yantai	NYIT offers MBA and dual-degree Masters programs at several schools across China. It opened an MOE-accredited institution in partnership with Nanjing University of Posts and Telecommunications, which offers Bachelor's degrees, in 2006. It opened another center in Beijing with the Communication University of China in 2015 to offer undergraduate and graduate programs, but both the Nanjing campus and the Beijing center began the process of shutting down in 2018.

U.S. universities have built up connections to China, establishing centers and programs.

Data: [C-BERT International Campus List](#), updated Oct. 2, 2020



Hannah Reale is a staff writer with *The Wire*. Previously, she reported for the New England Center for Investigative Reporting, *The West Side Rag*, and her college newspaper, *The Wesleyan Argus*. [@hannahereale](#)

● COVER STORY



Pole Position

BY EYCK FREYMAN

In public, Chinese diplomats and climate negotiators deny that they see any link between climate change and geopolitics. But there is a deeply cynical consensus within China's academic and policy communities that climate change creates geopolitical opportunities that China can exploit — and must exploit before its rivals do. Greenland was the proof of concept for this strategy. And it caught the U.S. flat-footed.

● THE BIG PICTURE



Transsion's Triumph

BY GARRETT O'BRIEN

A look at Transsion's monumental growth, unique marketing strategies and future growth potential.

● Q & A



Jörg Wuttke on China's Self-Destruction

BY ANDREW PEAPLE

The EU Chamber of Commerce in China president talks about China's self-inflicted problems; how he gets away with being so outspoken; and why he believes in China's comeback gene.



Visit News Products Store

News Products

Our best open-source research on Chinese companies, as well as industry guides to 100 of the most influential people in a China-focused industry.

[The Wire China Archives](#)

[Read More Articles >](#)

The Wire *China*

[Your account](#)

[About Us](#) | [Archives](#) | [Contact Us](#)



[Terms of Service](#) | [Privacy Policy](#) | ©2022 The Wire