



Another Major Milestone in Asian Americans' Fight for Equal Education Rights — Joint Complaint by 132 Asian American Organizations against Yale, Brown & Dartmouth

Thanks to the many volunteers and leaders of the 132 organizations who joined in our complaint against Yale University, Brown University and Dartmouth College regarding their discriminatory admissions practices against Asian American applicants. Today, the Asian American Coalition for Education (AACE) is very pleased to report to you that: With your help, we have jointly accomplished a major milestone in Asian Americans' pursuit of equal education rights!

The following are the highlights of our progress:

A. Submission of the Complaint

On May 23, 2016, representing 132 Chinese, Indian, Korean, Pakistani and Japanese American organizations all over the nation, the Asian American Coalition for Education officially submitted an administrative complaint to the Civil Rights Division, Department of Justice and the Office for Civil Rights, Department of Education. In this complaint we requested that the U.S. government initiate a civil-rights-violation investigation into the admissions processes of Yale University, Brown University and Dartmouth College, and require the three colleges and other Ivy League schools to stop their discriminatory admission practices against Asian American applicants.

B. News Conferences

At 2: 30 – 4:00 PM, May 23, 2016, the delegation of AACE held a successful news conference at the National Press Club of Washington DC which was attended by many English and Asian-language media. The news conference was hosted by AACE Board Member Swann Lee. On behalf of 132 Asian American organizations, Mr. YuKong Zhao, AACE President announced: *“Today is another major milestone in Asian Americans' fight for equal education rights. ... we want to tell Ivy League schools and other colleges: Asian American communities are going to continue our fight, until you totally stop your unlawful discrimination against our children! Just one year later, we have become even stronger: we have doubled our alliance as more than 130 Asian American organizations joined our complaint against Yale, Brown and Dartmouth.”* In the speech, Mr. Zhao listed compelling evidence indicating that Yale, Brown and Dartmouth used racial quotas, just-for-Asian higher admission standards, and racial stereotypes to discriminate against Asian American children. Deeply frustrated by the lack of support from the U.S. government for Asian American equal education rights over the past 10 years, on behalf of AACE, Mr. Zhao urged the U.S. Supreme Court to issue a total ban on racial discrimination in college admissions in its upcoming ruling of *Fisher vs. University of Texas*.



AACE Board Director
Ms. Swann Lee



AACE President
Mr. YuKong Zhao



U.S. House Rep.
Ed Royce



Student Representative
Mr. Jian Li

Following Mr. Zhao’s speech, U.S. Representative Ed Royce, chairman of the House Foreign Relations Committee, delivered a powerful support speech. He said: *“Being Asian American should not be an obstacle to receiving a top university education. It’s sad I have to make that clear in 2016. An education is the path to success for many Americans, which is why I find these allegations of discrimination so disturbing. Supporting the Coalition’s complaints is a mountain of evidence. Asian American parents are right to be concerned when their hard-working, high-performing children are shut out of top schools. We should be encouraging and inspiring our children to excel, not telling them their academic performance and merits are less important than their ethnicity. Any discrimination by elite universities against Asian American students is wrong and an offense to our Constitution’s 14th Amendment which offers citizens equal protection under the law. I will keep fighting to ensure that the Asian American community is not discriminated against in any way.”*

Mr. Jian Li, who filed the first individual complaint with Department of Education against the discriminatory practice of Ivy League schools in recent decades, delivered an inspirational speech on how he courageously stood up against the discrimination and fought it alone in 2006. He expressed his disappointment that Department of Education did a flawed investigation of Princeton University and failed to hold it accountable for its discrimination against Asian American students. He was also pleased that 10 years later, AACE and other 132 Asian American organizations have united to jointly fight Ivy League universities’ discrimination against Asian Americans. At the end of speech, he called on all discriminated-against Asian American students to stand up, file individual complaints with the Department of Education, and expose Ivy League universities’ discrimination on Facebook and other social media. *“Together, we will fight to ensure that universities can no longer treat us as second-class citizens!”*



Asian American Org Rep
Dr. Ajay P. Kotha



AACE Board Director
Professor Chunyan Li



AACE Vice-President
Dr. Jack Ouyang



AACE Secretary
Dr. Ting Dai

Representing the joined organizations (co-complainants), Dr. Ajay P. Kothari, President of American Society of Engineers of India Origin (ASEI, Washington DC Chapter) told the audience a compelling story of Western High School in Davie, Florida. Of more than 700 class of 2015 graduates, the top four

students were Asian-American (3 were Indian Americans) with outstanding academic and extracurricular achievements. Yet, none of them were accepted by Ivy League universities, while five non-Asian class members, all ranked lower, were accepted by Ivies, including Yale, Penn, Brown, and Cornell. Dr. Kothari believes the Ivy League's discrimination against Asian Americans is only a tip of an iceberg. He also discussed other subtle discrimination against Asian Americans and vowed to fight to change it.

After Dr. Kathari's speech, Ms. Lee read California State Senator Bob Huff's letter, in support of Asian Americans' complaint against Yale University, Brown University and Dartmouth College. Senator Huff wrote: *"I understand that many studies have indicated that Ivy League universities have engaged in systematic and continuous discrimination against Asian Americans during their very subjective "holistic" college admissions process. Even though the pool of highly-qualified Asian American college applicants has grown substantially, the admission rate lagged behind for Asian Americans in Ivy League Universities. This is clearly the result of racial discrimination and a de facto quota system....I proudly stand with the Asian American Coalition for Education working to end racially discriminatory practices by the Ivy League universities."*

After speeches, on behalf of 132 Asian American organizations, AACE Board Director, Professor Chunyan Li read our Request for Relief:

"Complainants request that the Office of Civil Rights, Department of Education and the Civil Rights Division, Department of Justice grant and enforce the following remedies:

- 1) Immediately launch objective investigations into the racial discrimination complained of herein.
- 2) Establish oversight committees to ensure the objectivity of the investigations, including delegates from AACE to represent the Asian-American community.
- 3) Require Yale University, Brown University and Dartmouth College to immediately cease and desist from using stereotypes, racial biases and other discriminatory means in evaluating Asian-American applicants during the admissions process.
- 4) Require Yale University, Brown University and Dartmouth College to immediately cease and desist from using racial quotas or racial balancing in the admissions process.
- 5) Require Yale University, Brown University and Dartmouth College to immediately cease and desist from using race in the admissions process; OR, in the alternative, require these institutions to strictly limit use of race to the extent permissible under relevant Supreme Court decisions.
- 6) Require Yale University, Brown University and Dartmouth College to limit the subjective components in the applicant evaluation process, using them only to the extent justified by the goals of education, not racial balancing.
- 7) Require Yale University, Brown University and Dartmouth College to disclose the qualifications of their applicant pools, at least at a level comparable to such data disclosed by elite public universities, given that they, too, are the recipients of significant federal funding.
- 8) Take all necessary measures to ensure that Yale University, Brown University, Dartmouth College and other Ivy League colleges never again discriminate against Asian-American applicants and/or applicants of other races."

In the news conference, AACE recognized outstanding individuals who have supported and/or contributed significantly to our fight for the equal education rights of Asian American children. The recipients of AACE Awards are:

1. Champion of Equal Education Award: Congressman Ed Royce, Congressman Dana Rohrabacher, and Senator Bob Huff;
2. Courage Award: Mr. Jian Li and Mr. Michael Wang;
3. Community Outreach Award: Dr. Alex Chen, Ms. Yingying Sun and Mr. Mike Zhu;
4. Fundraising Award: Dr. Jian Chen;
5. Service Award: Ms. Cindy Wang.



*AACE President Mr. YuKong Zhao
Presented Award to Congressman Royce*



*AACE Vice-President Dr. Jack Ouyang
Presented Award to Mr. Jian Li*



*AACE Vice-President Dr. Jack Ouyang
Presented Award to Dr. Jian Chen*

In the Question and Answer section hosted by AACE Secretary Ting Dai, journalists and members of the audience raised many challenging questions. When addressing the question regarding how to win over some Asian American organizations who support race-based college admissions, Mr. Zhao said the first is through effective communication. He shared a story of how an AACE delegation conducted a dialog with Asian Pacific American Bar Association (APABA) by presenting the compelling data on Ivy League's discrimination with executives of APABA. It helped APABA understand the severe and widespread nature of such discrimination. In addition, Mr. Zhao also challenged these Asian American organizations: if you really care about civil rights of Asian American children, please join our fight against Ivy League schools' discrimination against Asian American children. The news conference reached another climax when a Chinese American mother shared an emotional story about how her son was unfairly discriminated by Yale University and Brown University. Most in the audience were deeply touched by her personal experience. After her speech, two more members of the audience also shared similar stories about unlawful treatment of their children by Ivy League schools. To answer a question from WeChat that "Asian Americans make up only 6% of the U.S. population but Ivy League schools' freshman classes are 15% Asian American: why does AACE still believe that Ivy League schools discriminate against Asian American applicants?" Dr. Jack Ouyang, Vice-President of AACE explained: the test as to whether or not illegal discrimination against Asian American students has occurred is based on relevant laws such as the 14th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, the 1964 Civil Rights Act, and relevant U.S. Supreme Court rulings. It should not be judged by the admission rate of Asian American students at Ivy League schools.

At the end of the news conference, on behalf of AACE, Ms. Swann Lee expressed our sincere thanks to all participating organizations, and those who volunteered time and effort to support this endeavor, including many hardworking AACE Board Members.



Delegation & DC Supporters



News Crew and Supporters

C. Media Coverage

Our Complaint has received extensive news coverage from [NPR](#), [NBC](#), [Wall Street Journal](#), [CBS](#), [Fortune](#), [Huffington Post](#), [Inside Higher Education](#), [Voice of America](#), [National Review](#), [the World Journal](#), [SinoVision](#) and 60 more media outlets in the United States, China, India, Hong Kong, Taiwan, Korea, Pakistan and Japan.

Especially, two days after we filed the complaint against Yale, Brown and Dartmouth, former Dartmouth admission officer Dr. Michele Hernandez published “[The Ivy League Asian Problem](#)” at the *Huffington Post*, in which she revealed severe discrimination against Asian American students by Ivy League schools: “*From where we sit as advocates for transparency in admissions and as advocates for high school students and their parents, the complaint is valid. I’ve seen from the inside (as a former admissions officer at Dartmouth College) how even the so-called “holistic process” can discriminate against Asian students. Often high-scoring Asian applicants with top GPA’s were seen as ‘passive,’ ‘robotic,’ and ‘just another violin/piano playing standout’ with ‘lack of spark.’ Though I don’t think discrimination was intentional, there persisted a stereotype that the majority of Asian applicants were strong in math/science, played the violin or piano at a high level, attended Chinese (or Korean) school on weekends and often did tutoring, Kumon, high level math contests and award-centered activities like Academic Decathlon or Quiz Bowl. At committee discussions, Asians students were often rejected because they ‘didn’t stand out,’ were ‘too quiet,’ ‘low impact’ or ‘too one-sided.’ ... We feel strongly that colleges have not been fair to Asian applicants. ... We hope this complaint will lead to a deeper examination of the selective admissions process at top colleges to make it fairer for all college applicants and to move to end discrimination against any one group of students.*”

D. Significance of the Complaint

The joint complaint against Yale University, Brown University and Dartmouth College by the Asian American community is of great significance:

- It demonstrates the perseverance of Asian American communities in our fight for equal education rights. After our complaint against Harvard was rejected by the Department of Education, the Asian American Coalition did not give up. We continued our fight against Ivy League schools’ discrimination.

- It illustrates our rapidly expanding alliances. Last year we made history by uniting 64 Chinese-, Indian-, Korean- Pakistani- and other Asian-Americans organizations and jointly filed a civil-rights-violation complaint against Harvard. This year, we doubled our alliance by uniting 132 Chinese-, Indian-, Korean-, Pakistani-, Japanese- and other Asian-Americans organizations and filed a joint complaint against Yale, Brown and Dartmouth. Asian American communities are awakening, and we are building momentum.

We are very confident that our actions will press Ivy League schools and the U.S. government to treat Asian Americans' complaints seriously and possibly lead to meaningful actions to reduce or eliminate such discrimination.

E. Next Steps

Now, we have successfully filed our second joint complaint against Ivy League universities. We have not only created, but also maintained momentum. We are very encouraged and hope you are, too. However, this is only the second step. In order to achieve our objective of eliminating the racial discrimination in college admissions, we have to do more:

1. We plan call for support from American political leaders to issue letters in support of our complaint, to urge the Department of Education and Department of Justice to immediately launch an investigation.
2. We call on all supporting Asian American organizations to become AACE partners. After becoming a partner, your individual organization will not need future board approval to join all actions that are in line with AACE's mission and AACE's position on discrimination in higher education.
3. We plan to call on all discriminated-against Asian American students to file individual complaints with the Departments of Education and Justice if they are unfairly treated by Ivy League or other universities.

Again, our actions have proven that if we unite, we have the chance to bring equal education rights to our children! We count on your continuous support to jointly achieve our objectives.

The following are relevant links.

- [AACE Complaint against Yale University, Brown University and Dartmouth College;](#)
- [Video clips of our news conference;](#)
- [Transcript of Mr. YuKong Zhao's announcement speech.](#)

For any suggestions and comments, please do not hesitate to write to us:
info@AsianAmericanforEducation.org.

Thanks again for your support!

Asian American Coalition for Education

June 14, 2016