



Asian American Coalition for Education
P.O. Box 507
Livingston, NJ 07039

August 23rd, 2016

Ms. Catherine Lhamon
Assistant Secretary
Office for Civil Rights
U.S. Department of Education
400 Maryland Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20202-1100

Dear Assistant Secretary Lhamon:

We are writing to you regarding complaints filed on August 10, 2016 with your office by Hubert Zhao, an Orlando based Asian American student, against Columbia University and Cornell University.

According to the complaints, Hubert Zhao is an outstanding student with excellent academic and extracurricular achievements. He achieved a GPA of 5.3 (4.0 if unweighted), and exceptional PSAT and SAT scores. His academic accomplishments were rewarded with a National Merit Scholarship. Hubert also excelled in extracurricular activities in a regular high school where coaching and resources are not competitive. He was the president and captain of his high school's Science Olympiad, Debate, and Science Bowl teams. His FTC robotics team made it to the World Championship twice. Hubert also played soccer, had spent numerous hours volunteering at the Florida Hospital Cancer Institute and other organizations. Hubert was not a "typical" Asian science and math geek, but a socially active and conscious student leader. And yet, he was rejected as just another holistically excellent Asian American applicant when he applied to Ivy League schools.

It is worth pointing out, in his high school of 700 graduating students, only Hubert and another Indian-American student qualified as National Merit Semifinalists. However, neither of them was accepted by any of America's top 20 ranked universities. Other students from different racial groups in his high school, with objectively and often significantly lower academic and

extracurricular credentials, were admitted by some of those top 20 universities.

What happened to Hubert Zhao is another example of the widespread and systematic illegal discrimination against Asian American students by many colleges. The very fact that Hubert is the son of Mr. YuKong Zhao, the President of our organization, Asian American Coalition for Education (AACE), and that Hubert was rejected by all three Ivy League schools he applied to, raises a serious concern if Hubert was evaluated unfavorably by those Ivy League schools because of his father's courageous act of leading Asian Americans' fight against Ivy League schools' discrimination on college admissions.

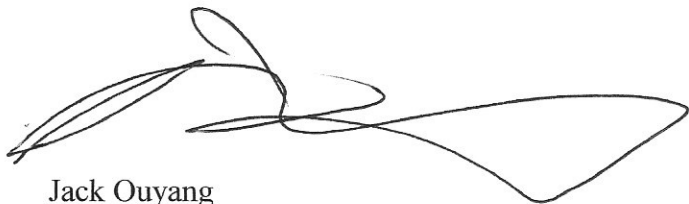
The members of AACE are outraged by such blatant discrimination. Mr. Yukong Zhao's child is not alone—tens of thousands of talented Asian American children are treated as second class citizens who are less 'diverse' solely because of their race.

We strongly request your office to review his complaints with full and fair consideration consistent with applicable law, rules and regulations, and request you to take immediate actions you deem warranted to protect him against any infringements on their constitutional rights of equal protection under the law, including urge relevant universities to correct their decisions. Asian American communities demand an answer!

In May 2014, President Obama made a promise to Asian-Americans: "let us ensure the laws respect everyone, civil rights apply to everyone, and everyone who works hard and plays by the rules has a chance to get ahead." Asian-Americans are the ones who work hard and play by the rules. The discrimination alleged by the complaints is indefensible, improper, and immoral. In the absence of any meaningful enforcement actions taken by the U.S. Government, Ivy League universities and other American universities are still violating the civil rights of Asian-American applicants on a continuous and systematic basis. We sincerely request your office to take action now!

We look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jack Ouyang', with a large, sweeping loop at the end.

Jack Ouyang

Vice-President
Asian American Coalition for Education