



Asian American Coalition for Education

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October 30, 2023

**Subject: AACE Urges the U.S. Department of Education Investigate the Appalling Discrimination against Stanley Zhong (Complaint case # 09-23-1782)**

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 urge your office to take immediate action to address the appalling discrimination endured by Stanley Zhong, whose mother, Yun Luo, filed a complaint (case # 09-23-1782) with your office in September 2023 against the following colleges:

- University of California, Berkeley
- University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA)
- University of California, San Diego
- University of California, Santa Barbara, and
- University of California, Davis

Stanley Zhong has a remarkable academic, programming, and entrepreneurial record. He has an unweighted GPA of 3.97, has an SAT score of 1590, and is a National Merit Scholarship finalist. In addition, he was a finalist of major global programming competitions, such as the Google Code Jam Coding Contest and the MIT Battlecode. He also created an e-signature startup, RabbitSign.com, which has grown to tens of thousands of users organically and received much recognition, to include from Amazon Web Services. On the philanthropic side, Stanley also co-founded a non-profit that brought free coding lessons to more than 500 students in underserved communities in California, Washington, and Texas. With his extraordinary talent, Google hired him as an L4 software engineer, a position typically offered to candidates that are college graduates with multiple years of professional experience.

However, Stanley was rejected by sixteen American colleges, including California Polytechnic State University, the University of Wisconsin, the University of Washington,

the University of Illinois, the University of Michigan, Georgia Institute of Technology, California Institute of Technology, Stanford University, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Carnegie Mellon University, Cornell University, and as well as the five colleges mentioned above.

Using the holistic criteria advocated by American colleges, Stanley Zhong is obviously an exceptional applicant. He would have been admitted by most colleges he applied to if he were black or Hispanic. As an Asian, he was rejected by most colleges as result of their illegal racial diversity and equity programs. It is un-American for so many universities to deny his enrollment simply because he was born with the “wrong race.” Asian American communities are outraged by such appalling racial discrimination against Stanley.

Regarding the University of California System, which Ms. Yun Luo filed a complaint against, it faced a lawsuit in 2018 by UCLA professor Richard Sander for its alleged anti-Asian discrimination in college admissions. UCLA’s late distinguished sociologist, Robert D. Mare, also documented persistent anti-Asian bias in UCLA’s admissions process.

In his report titled “Holistic Review in Freshman Admissions at the University of California—Los Angeles 2009-2011 Update” (attached), Dr. Mare concluded, on pages 25-26:

*“2...In both Final and Supplemental Review, African American applicants receive somewhat more favorable and “North Asian” (Chinese, Japanese, Korean, Indian/Pakistani American) applicants receive somewhat less favorable holistic read scores than applicants in other ethnic identity groups who are otherwise similar in measured academic qualifications, personal characteristics, and measured challenges and hardships....*

*3...If we adjust for ethnic identity group differences in the characteristics of applicants, a different pattern of ethnic disparity emerges. Among otherwise equivalent applicants, Whites, African Americans, and Latinos are overrepresented among those admitted and Asian American applicants are underrepresented. For Black and Latino Applicants, these disparities arise principally in Final and Supplemental Review. **The disadvantages of Asian applicants occur, with varying magnitudes, throughout the admissions process...***

*4... Although net disparities among ethnic identity groups persist, especially in the Final and Supplemental Review stages of the admissions process, the net advantages to African American and Latino applicants appear to have declined somewhat over the 2007-11 period. **The disadvantages experienced by some Asian applicant groups, however, have not declined over this period.**”*

What Dr. Mare uncovered at UCLA may only be a glimpse of the bigger picture, since the University of California System uses the same admissions standards for all its campuses. In 2021, the University of California system even scrapped standardized testing to pursue “racial equity.” By removing this objective admissions factor, the University of California

could intensify its hidden discrimination against Asian-American applicants, like Stanley Zhong, who are seen as an “over-represented” racial group in their view of racial equity.

We strongly request your office to review Stanley’s complaint with full and fair consideration consistent with all applicable laws, rules, and regulations and request you to take any actions you deem warranted to protect Stanley Zhong against any infringements upon his right of equal protection under the law, to include demanding that relevant universities to correct their decisions.

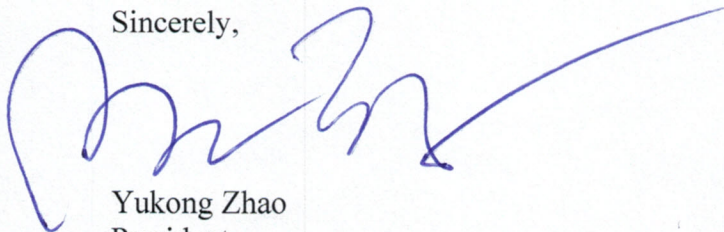
On January 26, 2021, in his “Memorandum Condemning and Combating Racism, Xenophobia, and Intolerance Against Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders in the United States”, President Biden promised:

*“(c) **The Attorney General shall** explore opportunities to support, consistent with applicable law, the efforts of State and local agencies, as well as AAPI communities and community-based organizations, **to prevent discrimination, bullying, harassment, and hate crimes against AAPI individuals**, and to expand collection of data and public reporting regarding hate incidents against such individuals.”*

Your office must fulfill President Biden’s promise by conducting a comprehensive investigation into Stanley Zhong’s case.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,



Yukong Zhao  
President  
Asian American Coalition for Education

Attachment: “Holistic Review in Freshman Admissions at the University of California—Los Angeles 2009-2011 Update” by Dr. Robert D. Mare