Petition to the Committee of the Council

We, the undersigned, having serious reservations about the presence of
the Confucius Institute within the academic program of the University of
Chicago, respectfully request that the Council of the Faculty Senate
debate and decide whether to renew the contract this Fall with the Head
Office of the Confucius Institutes, Beijing (Hanban). For reasons that
follow, we believe that the Council has jurisdiction in this matter, and
that terminating the relationship with the Confucius Institutes would be
consistent with the intellectual principles and values of the University:

--Although it is generally acknowledged that decisions concerning the
establishment of entities with teaching responsibilities (“education”)
fall within the purview of the Council for approval, and although the
original Agreement with Hanban signed on 29 September 2009 prominently
included such teaching, the creation of the Confucius Institute was not
brought before the Council at that time. We believe it now falls to the
Council to remedy that oversight with regard to a contract with Hanban
which specifies: in Article 4, that the Confucius Institute will
undertake the teaching of Chinese language, provide Chinese language
teaching resources, and train Chinese language instructors; and in
Article 6, that Hanban will provide 3000 volumes of Chinese books,
teaching materials, and audio visual materials, as well as “send
sufficient numbers of qualified instructors…and pay for their airfares
and salaries.” (The Agreement of September, 2009 is appended to this email.)

--The dubious practice of allowing an external institution to staff
academic courses within the University is here exacerbated by the fact
that Hanban is an agency of the Chinese government, and that the global
agenda of Hanban, according to its own Constitution and ByLaws, is set
by high officials of the Party-State, to whom the Head Office reports
annually. It may also be noted that research proposals approved by the
Chicago Confucius Institute are sent to Hanban for approval for funding.

--Among the problems posed by Hanban’s control of the hiring and
training of teachers is that that it thus subjects the University’s
academic program to the political constraints on free speech and belief
that are specific to the People’s Republic of China. The more so since
the Hanban Constitution specifies that Chinese law applies to the
activities of Confucius Institutes, and that the University of Chicago’s
role in the hiring does not extend to the selection of the Hanban
teachers. The University apparently reserves the right to refuse
teachers proposed by Hanban, but that right has never been exercised.
Among the unwanted effects, the University may well be complicit, then,
in discriminatory hiring, as was exposed in the well-known case of
McMaster University in 2011-12. A Hanban teacher was dismissed when it
was revealed she was a follower of Falun Gong; and when the case was
brought before the Human Rights Tribunal of Ontario, McMaster was put in
the position of defending itself against a charge of discriminatory
hiring contrary to Canadian law and its own academic principles.
McMaster thereupon did not renew its contract with Hanban. Indeed the
Governing Council of the Canadian Association of University Teachers,
representing some 68,000 teachers in more than 120 colleges and
universities, recently passed a resolution “calling on universities and
colleges in Canada which currently host Confucius Institutes on their
campuses to cease doing so. And those contemplating such arrangements to
pursue them no further.” In an accompanying statement, the Executive
Director observed that Canadian colleges and universities were
compromising their own integrity by allowing Hanban ”to have a voice in
a number of academic matters such as curriculum, texts, and topics of
class discussions.”

--It was established in the McMaster case and has since been
corroborated as well in an American secondary school CI (“Confucius
Classroom”) that the Hanban teachers are trained to ignore or divert
questions on issues that are politically taboo in China, or indeed
criminalized, such as the status of Taiwan, Tiananmen, the pro-Democracy
movement, etc. These questions do arise in Chinese language classrooms,
even as they may be prompted in videos or the history texts of advanced
language courses. A petition submitted to the New South Wales Parliament
in 2011, signed by some 10,000 citizens, called for the termination of
CI Confucius Classrooms in the public secondary and primary schools of
the province, on the grounds that “the NSW government has admitted that
topics sensitive to the Chinese government including Taiwan, Tibet,
Falun Gong, and human rights violations would not be included in these
classes,” and that “Confucius classes are directly linked to and funded
by the Chinese government.”

--Although the University of Chicago has ignored the provisions in the
Agreement specifying that Hanban will supply texts and course materials
for Chinese language instruction, this is not the case in the numerous
smaller colleges in the US and around the world, as well as in the
hundreds of Confucius Classrooms in secondary and primary schools, that
are not in a position to provide their own Chinese language curriculum.
In Chicago public schools alone, there are 42 Confucius classrooms
operating by Hanban rules.

--Although as just noted, the University of Chicago is hosting a CI
under privileges not available to many other schools, the effect is
that, mindful only of its own welfare, the University is participating
in a worldwide, politico-pedagogical project that is contrary in many
respects to its own academic values. Indeed by lending its good name to
the CI project, the University, nolens volens, is helping to promote an
enterprise that compromises the academic integrity of many universities
around the world even as it is inimical to its own.

For these reasons, we urge the Council of the Senate to terminate the
contract with the Confucius Institutes.

* Yali Amit, Professor and Chair, Dept. of Statistics
* Dan Arnold, Associate Professor of the Philosophy of Religions, Divinity School
* Leora Auslander, Professor of History
* Ralph Austen, Professor Emeritus of African History, Dept. of History
* Lauren Berlant, George M. Pullman Distinguished Service Professor of English
* Hans Dieter Betz, Shailer Mathews Professor Emeritus of New Testament, Divinity School
* Robert Bird, Associate Professor of Slavic Languages and Literatures and Chair, Dept. of Cinema and Media Studies
* Douglas K. Bishop, Professor, Depts. of Radiation and Cellular Oncology and Molecular Genetics and Cell Biology
* Rachel Fulton Brown, Associate Professor of History
* Daniel Brudney, Professor of Philosophy
* E. Summerson Carr, Associate Professor, SSA
* Kyeong-Hee Choi, Associate Professor of East Asian Languages and Civilizations
* Cathy Cohen, David and Mary Winton Green Professor and Chair, Dept. of Political Science
* Jennifer Cole, Professor, Dept. of Comparative Human Development
* Whitney Cox, Associate Professor of South Asian Language and Civilizations
* Bruce Cumings, Gustavus F. and Ann M. Swift Distinguished Service Professor in History and the College and Chair, Dept. of History
* Manuela Carneiro da Cunha. Professor Emerita of Anthropology
* Kristine A. Culp, Associate Professor of Theology, Divinity School
* Shannon Lee Dawdy, Associate Professor of Anthropology
* Michael Dawson, John D. MacArthur Professor of Political Science and the College, Director of the Center for the Study of Race, Politics, and Culture
* Philippe Desan, Howard L. Willett Professor of Romance Languages and Literature and Committee on the History of Culture
* Michael Dietler, Professor of Anthropology
* Fred Donner, Professor of Near Eastern History, Oriental Institute
* Alireza Doostdar, Assistant Professor of Islamic Studies and the Anthropology of Religion, Divinity School
* Christopher Faraone, Frank Curtis Springer and Gertrude Melcher Springer Professor in the Humanities and Professor, Dept. of Classics and the College.
* James W. Fernandez, Professor Emeritus of Anthropology
* Norma Field, Robert S. Ingersoll Distinguished Service Professor in Japanese Studies in East Asian Languages and Civilizations
* Cornell H. Fleischer, Kanuni Suleyman Professor of Ottoman and Modern Turkish Studies
* Raymond D. Fogelson, Professor Emeritus of Anthropology
* Susan Gal, Professor of Anthropology
* Godfrey Getz, Professor, Dept. of Pathology and Dept. of Biochemistry and Molecular Biology
* McGuire Gibson, Professor of Mesopotamian Archaeology, Oriental Institute
* Jan Goldstein, Norman and Edna Freehling Professor of History
* Tom Gunning, Edwin A. and Betty L. Bergman Distinguished Service Professor, Dept. of Art History, Dept. of Cinema and Media Studies, and the College
* Susan Gzesh, Senior Lecturer in the College, Executive Director, Human Rights Program
* Elaine Hadley, Professor and Chair, Dept. of English
* Elizabeth Helsinger, John Matthews Manly Distinguished Service Professor Emerita, Depts. of English, Art History, and Visual Arts
* Denis Hirschfeldt, Professor of Mathematics
* Thomas C. Holt, James Westfall Distinguished Service Professor of History
* Janet H. Johnson, Morton D. Hull Distinguished Service Professor of Egyptology, Oriental Institute, Dept. of Near Eastern Languages and Civilization, and Dept. of Classics
* Hakan Karateke, Associate Professor of Ottoman and Turkish Culture, Language and Literature, Dept. of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations
* John Kelly, Professor of Anthropology
* Robert L. Kendrick, Professor of Music and the College
* James Ketelaar, Professor, Depts. of History, East Asian Languages and Civilizations, and the Divinity School
* Janice Knight, Associate Professor of English
* Loren Kruger, Professor of English
* Benjamin B. Lahey, Irving B. Harris Professor of Epidemiology, Psychiatry, and Behavioral Neuroscience
* Susan J. Lambert, Associate Professor, SSA, Editor, *Social Service Review*
* James Lastra, Associate Professor, Depts. of English and Cinema and Media Studies
* Bruce Lincoln, Caroline E. Haskell Distinguished Service Professor of History of Religions, Medieval Studies, and Middle Eastern Studies
* Eric Lombard, Professor Emeritus, Organismal Biology and Anatomy
* Agnes Lugo-Ortiz, Associate Professor of Latin American Literature, Dept. of Romance Languages and Literatures
* Mary Briody Mahowald, Professor Emerita, Dept. of Obstetrics and Gynecology and MacLean Center for Clinical Medical Ethics
* Boris (Rodin) Maslov, Assistant Professor of Comparative Literature
* John P. McCormick, Professor of Political Science
* Bernard McGinn, Naomi Shenstone Donnelley Professor Emeritus, Divinity School
* Françoise Meltzer, Edward Carson Waller Distinguished Service Professor and Chair, Dept. of Comparative Literature, Professor in the Divinity School and the College
* W.J.T. Mitchell, Gaylord Donnelley Distinguished Service Professor, Depts. Of English and Art History
* Daniel R. Morgan, Associate Professor of Cinema and Media Studies
* Janel Mueller, William Rainey Harper Distinguished Service Professor Emerita in the College and Dept. of English, Dean of the Humanities Division, 1999-2004
* Salikoko Mufwene, Frank G. McLoraine Distinguished Service Professor of Linguistics
* Nancy D. Munn, Professor Emerita of Anthropology
* Matam Murthy, Professor Emeritus of Mathematics
* C.M. Naim, Professor Emeritus of South Asian Languages and Civilizations
* David Orlinsky, Professor Emeritus of Comparative Human Development
* Willemien Otten, Professor of Theology and History of Christianity, Divinity School
* Stephan Palmié, Professor and Dept. Chair, Anthropology
* Virginia Parks, Associate Professor, SSA
* Thomas Pavel, Gordon J. Laing Distinguished Service Professor in Romance Languages and Literature
* Charles M. Payne, Frank P. Hixon Distinguished Service Professor, SSA
* Jennifer Pitts, Associate Professor of Political Science
* Moishe Postone, Thomas E. Donnelley Professor of Modern History and the College
* Clifton Ragsdale, Professor of Neurobiology
* Samuel Refetoff, Professor, Emeritus of Endocrinology, Dept. of Pediatrics, Committee on Genetics
* François G. Richard, Assistant Professor of Anthropology
* Robert K. Ritner, Professor of Egyptology, Oriental Institute
* Jon Rosner, Professor Emeritus, Dept. of Physics and Enrico Fermi Institute
* Mel Rothenburg, Professor Emeritus of Mathematics
* Larry Rothfield, Associate Professor of English and Comparative Literature
* Lisa Ruddick, Associate Professor of English
* Marshall Sahlins, Charles F. Grey Distinguished Service Professor Emeritus of Anthropology
* Mario Santana, Associate Professor of Spanish
* Hans Schreiber, Professor of Pathology
* Bart Schultz, Director of the Civic Knowledge Project, Senior Lecturer in the Humanities
* William Schweiker, Edward L. Ryerson Distinguished Service Professor of Theological Ethics, Divinity School
* William H. Sewell, Jr., Frank P. Hixon Distinguished Service Professor Emeritus, Depts. of Political Science and History
* James Shapiro, Professor, Dept. of Biochemistry and Molecular Biology
* Holly Shissler, Associate Professor of Middle Eastern History, Dept. of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations
* William Sites, Associate Professor, SSA
* Joel Snyder, Professor of Art History, Cinema, and Media Studies
* Amy Dru Stanley, Associate Professor, Dept. of History and the Law School
* Howard Stein, Professor Emeritus of Philosophy, the Committee on Conceptual and Historical Studies of Science, and the College
* Josef Stern, Willam H. Colvin Professor of Philosophy
* Matthew W. Stolper, John A. Wilson Professor Emeritus of Oriental Studies
* Richard Strier, Sulzberger Distinguished Service Professor Emeritus, Dept. of English
* William Tait, Professor Emeritus of Philosophy
* Christopher Taylor, Assistant Professor of English
* Katharine Fischer Taylor, Associate Professor of Art History
* Sonali Thakkar, Assistant Professor of English
* Aaron Turkewitz, Associate Professor, Molecular Genetics & Cell Biology
* Russell H. Tuttle, Professor in Anthropology, Committee on Evolutionary Biology, Morris Fishbein Center for the History of Medicine, and the Social Sciences and Biological Sciences Collegiate Division
* Kenneth W. Warren, Fairfax M. Cone Distinguished Service Professor of English
* Lisa Wedeen, Mary R. Morton Professor of Political Science and the College
* Rebecca West, William R. Kenan Distinguished Service Professor Emerita of Romance Languages and Literatures, Cinema and Media Studies
* John E. Woods, Professor of Iranian and Central Asian History and Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations, Dept. of History
* Anthony C. Yu, Carl Darling Buck Distinguished Service Professor in Humanities, and Professor in the Divinity School, Depts. of East Asian Languages and Civilizations, English, Comparative Literature, and Social Thought
* Tara Zahra, Professor of History
* Rebecca Zorach, Associate Professor of Art History