



## **Call for the Immediate Reinstatement of Professor Franklin Tao**

*Chinese American Legal Defense Alliance (CALDA)*

*July 30, 2024*

Dear Chancellor Douglas A. Girod,

Members of the Chinese American Legal Defense Alliance (CALDA) urgently request that you reinstate Dr. Franklin Tao's professorial position and tenure at the University of Kansas (KU). Prof. Tao was wrongfully arrested and convicted in 2019 due to the now-defunct "China Initiative" - leading to the termination of his tenure at KU. Now, the Tenth Circuit of Appeals has voided his wrongful conviction on all counts and unequivocally confirmed his innocence. Accordingly, it is imperative that KU restore him to the position he should have rightfully held and help to rehabilitate his professional reputation.

CALDA is a non-profit organization dedicated to providing legal representation to Chinese Americans who have suffered racial discrimination, profiling, and hatred. Through advocacy, litigation, and other legal efforts, CALDA is firmly committed to combatting and eradicating all forms of prejudice, discrimination, and hostility directed toward individuals of Chinese descent living in the United States.

Pursuant to an agreement reached by Prof. Tao and KU in July 2020, KU is obligated to reevaluate any administrative disciplinary action and consider reinstating him if the criminal proceedings against him are dismissed or result in acquittal. However, KU terminated Prof. Tao's employment in January 2023 when his criminal case was still ongoing. **On July 11, 2024**, the U.S. Tenth Circuit Court of Appeals exonerated Prof. Tao and directed the U.S. District Court to enter a Not Guilty verdict, thereby confirming his innocence against the baseless allegations stemming from the China Initiative. The conviction has now been voided in all respects, requiring KU to consider his reinstatement.

During his time as a tenured associate professor at KU, Prof. Tao was honored as an

AAAS Fellow and received the prestigious KU University Scholarly Achievement for his outstanding contributions to KU. Despite being on unpaid administrative leave since being banned from campus in 2019, Prof. Tao continued his academic work from home, publishing nearly 30 papers in prestigious journals and authoring two monographs. U.S District Court Senior Judge Julie A. Robinson remarked on his high level of productivity as an indication of his “continued value to society.”

We respectfully urge you to reinstate Prof. Tao’s tenured faculty position. Any further delay would violate the University’s [core values](#): intellectual diversity, integrity, disciplined inquiry, and fostering a “multicultural, inclusive environment in which the dignity and rights of the individual are respected.”

Sincerely,

Keliang (Clay) Zhu  
Attorney and President  
On behalf of the Chinese American Legal Defense Alliance