Professors, Colleagues and Friends,

Thank you all for coming to the ACPSS 2021 onsite Conference at Pacific Lutheran University (PLU)!

Thank you, Dr. Foy, Dr. Manfredi, Dr. Zhou and Dr. Edwards, without your ardent support and tremendous effort, we would not have been able to meet here on such a beautiful campus. Thank you once again!

In the past year and a half, we have experienced a great challenge: the world-wide pandemic hindered us from doing research, going to conferences or teaching classes at school. Because of Covid-19, many schools issued travel bans, and other schools have no funding for any business trips. Moreover, the global pandemic made it impossible for our colleagues from China to travel across the Pacific to join us for the conference. However, following the Covid protocols, coping with the CDC guidelines and collaborating with PLU, I am pleased to open the 26th International Conference of the Association of Chinese Professors of Social Sciences in the United States, after a year of delay.

From tomorrow morning on, participants both onsite and online will present their papers on topics focusing on the theme, “China in the Challenging 21 century (二十一世纪博弈中崛起的中国）.” The world was dragged into more than a half century of Cold War between the two major camps headed by the Soviet Union on one side and the United States on the opposite, right after WWII in the middle of the 20th century. Scholars generally referred to the “Cold War” in terms of conflicts in ideology, economic systems and political strategies. Yet, military confrontations, regional wars and armed competitions had often followed geographic concerns about spheres of influence and politics.

The Cold War was ended upon the collapse of the Soviet Union while Wars on Terror have become the center of international politics from the beginning of the 21st century. Meanwhile, the rise of China in global affairs and its rapid economic and technological development alarmed the United States and its European allies. Looking for a rival, the theory of “China Threat” prevails. China has been artificially reimagined as “an enemy-in-a-box” by some American politicians as Van Burenis Peter phrased it, especially when the wars of terror “sputtered out and America needed a new villain.” Taking the neo-Churchillian view of the post war globe, and sticking to old playbooks, the old WWII reenactors envision China as an autocratic foil for democracy to wage a global struggle against. Scholars describe it as a new cold war.
China is more than a country, but a civilization. In the past 5,000 years, China has developed into a united nation through wars against the expansion of powers of kingdoms and warlords’ wars. The spread of Confucianism added resplendency to a gigantic cultural China with its admiration of individual social responsibility and mutual respect. However, in the recent memories of the nation starting from the middle the 19th century, the consequences and impacts of the Opium War, the Sino-French war, the Russo-Japanese war, just mentioning a few, dominated the life of the nation. Life and liberty, civil rights and democracy are not just the rhetoric of Western ideology and practice, they have also been the desire of the Chinese. The Taiping rebellion at the middle of 19th century and the Boxers’ rebellion at the turn of the 20th century, exemplified the struggles of the Chinese for life, liberty and civil rights. As part of the global community, the Chinese see territorial integrity to be inviolable principle of sovereignty. They also see their demand for mutual respect and equality in dealing with international affairs within the context of democracy.

The world as well as China is now confronting new challenges in global warming, a public health crisis, economic depression, trade disputes as well as the emerging problem of an aging population in the 21st century. Environmental protection and natural sustainability have been the focus of China’s policy as part of their concern for human life and liberty. Its recent promise on the control of carbon emission and its goal for carbon neutrality in 2060 demonstrates the seriousness of the government on this matter. Yet, the shortage of energy resources and the search for new sources of energy pose great challenges. Recent global energy shortages bring urgency to economic transformation and restructuring as well.

The globe has been continuously suffering from the covid-19 pandemic. The constant attack of a variant virus kills hundreds of thousands of people. Out of 4.55 million deaths worldwide, 724 thousand succumbed in the United States alone. The future epidemic prevention and scientific tracing of the virus’ origins in order to stop its spread has been a big task for China and the world. Moreover, the increasing tension and distrust between the United States and China, particularly with the development of high technologies in China, and the current bilateral trade wars have already affected the world economy and normal financial activities.

We will have a great opportunity to discuss and exchange ideas in person on such issues as mentioned. Some scholarly research explores the current social environment that causes ethnic conflicts and damage, and that need to be fixed. Other scholars extend their research on the role of social media and information operation in international communications. Scholars also present historical lessons to understand current bilateral relations between China and the United States. Moreover, participants will have a chance to meet and talk to editors of the ACPSS peer review journal, The American Review of China Studies and book series of Asia in the New Millennium, and China: from Revolution to Reform as well as 海外华人学者中国研究文业。

With the efforts of all members, ACPSS has been remaining an active professional organization providing a platform for academic discussions that touch many topics. Even during the standstill of the pandemic, we continued our discussions and arguments through WeChat and other social media. Some members were invited to give a virtual talk on current issues such as the violation of civil rights of Asian Americans; others participated in various organized virtual meetings.
Without an enthusiastic engagement in these activities and events, ACPSS would not be so successful.

Our years of success rely on the support of colleges and universities we are teaching for, and the support of Confucius Institutes on various campuses. In addition to the institutional support, individuals have also contributed to the strength of our organization. Guili Zhang, Professor and Chair of the Department of Special Education, Foundations and Research, College of Education East Carolina University and Daniel Wall, a world-renowned artist, and the top selling artist of Park West Gallery, designed the ACPSS logo; Dr. Hong Chen, Professor of Physics at University of North Florida, has been maintaining our website. Our appreciation goes to all of them.

Now I would like to invite some members of ACPSS to join me to talk about their experiences with the organization and demonstrate the achievements we made.