



Black China Caucus Celebrates Two-Year Anniversary

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Washington, DC – The Black China Caucus Association (“BCC”), a nonprofit dedicated to promoting, developing, advancing, and enhancing the presence and participation of Black professionals who specialize on China, is excited to celebrate its two-year anniversary and accomplishments!

Beginning in 2020, Dr. Keisha Brown, Co-Chief Executive Officer, and Mark Akpaninyie, Co-Chief Executive Officer, noticed that discourse on China, across all sectors and disciplines, academia, policy, art, and tech, has largely failed to include and encourage the participation of Black China professionals. In light of these issues, Dr. Brown and Mr. Akpaninyie joined together and, on March 24, 2020, jointly founded BCC with the aim to enhance and advance the voices of Black professionals who focus on China.

BCC's mission is to build a coalition and community of Black China professionals to rectify issues of underrepresentation and exclusion. BCC began to work towards this mandate by building a publicly available, text searchable, and centralized hub of Black China specialists. In doing so, journalists, potential employers, multilateral institutions, governmental bodies, event organizers, researchers, and the broader public can now access a global database of Black professionals whose expertise covers critical, cutting-edge, and contemporary topics necessary to understanding China.

What began as an endeavor to survey Black experiences in the China space quickly blossomed into a fully-fledged organization. BCC recruited Avonda Fogan, Executive Vice President, and Mycal Ford, Chief Operating Officer, who joined BCC's leadership team, bringing along with them their diverse experience related to China and, more importantly, their acumen for nonprofit management and strategy. The executive leadership team of BCC has grown to eight total members, all of whom bring their individual expertise, and social media, editing, programmatic, and event planning skills to bear.

Through the leadership of Ms. Fogan, combined with the support of the leadership team, BCC has officially registered as a 501(c)3 tax-exempt nonprofit organization. This noteworthy milestone will help accelerate the growth of BCC and its ability to implement its mission with purpose and longevity.

Besides building and sustaining an inclusive community of Black China specialists, and growing its leadership base, BCC has created programs to empower its members. In 2021, BCC launched a pilot mentorship program designed to pair early and mid-career professionals within the BCC community with seasoned China policy professionals. Due to the success of the pilot, in February 2022, BCC officially launched its professional mentorship program, which aims to build upon the prior year's pilot program by creating additional structure and forging more meaningful connections.

Beyond programs, BCC has hosted numerous internal and external, online and in-person, events in coordination with various established nonprofits, academic institutions, and organizations. These have included networking events with BCC's membership base, happy hours, and invited talks. In Spring 2021, BCC hosted a BCC members-only fireside chat in which a former senior government official

recounted their experiences and lessons learned as a Black China professional. BCC also partnered with the Association for Asian Studies on an event titled, “Black China Trailblazers” which reflected on the historical legacies of Black China experts, their work, and continued impact. In the Spring and Summer of 2021, BCC partnered with the National Association for Black Engagement in Asia (“NABEA”) to host a three-part series entitled, “Black American Identity in China” with discussions that explored themes about being a Black American in Chinese society. More recently, in Winter 2022, BCC and the US-China Business Council held a public event titled, “The New Age of China Experts: What it means to be a China Expert in 2022.” This event reflected on the notion of what it means to be a China expert in 2022.

The growing work and efforts of BCC have extended beyond internal and external programming. In fact, BCC’s mission has captured the attention of news and media outlets, including the Washington Post, Reuters, POLITICO, Newsweek, South China Morning Post, and Vice News.

Indeed, the past two years have afforded BCC much success – due, in large part, to the immense support of its partner organizations, supporters, and friends.

As BCC looks ahead to the rest of 2022 and beyond, BCC anticipates the launch of several new initiatives, including:

- Working groups, which will include curated sessions that will bring industry-diverse Black China professionals together to enhance expertise and shared understanding on specific topics of interest within the China space!
- A scholarship program that enables a young professional to explore any topic related to China through art!
- Upskilling sessions, whereby BCC will invite established professionals to lead workshops on specific topics, such as media training, op-ed writing, public speaking, and more!

If you would like to support the mission of the Black China Caucus or learn how to become a partner, please visit our website at www.blackchinacaucus.org or email BCC at info@blackchinacaucus.org.

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