



## **CHINA TOWN HALL: MODERATION FACILITATION GUIDELINES AND RESOURCES**

Thank you for agreeing to be part of this year's CHINA Town Hall (CTH) by facilitating a discussion among the local attendees. As you may know, CTH is a long-running program, but this year we have changed the format of both the national website portion as well as the local venue portion. In light of the current political climate, instead of having a lecture-style format for the latter, we have asked each venue to host its own town hall. Our goal is to have the attendees at the local venues talk amongst themselves about their attitudes, concerns, and feelings about the relationship. Your role as a discussion facilitator is critical to this objective.

Some of you receiving this may be expert moderators/facilitators with years of experience; others may be doing this for the first time. Thus you may find the following immensely useful, or irrelevant, or somewhere in between. So please look at the various resources and take from them what you find beneficial:

1. Suggested outline for moderation
2. Guiding questions for discussion
3. Best practices for discussion moderation and facilitation

## **1. SUGGESTED OUTLINE FOR MODERATION**

*\*Please note that it is not required that you adhere to this format. You are welcome to structure the conversation in whatever way you think would best suit the needs of your local venue.*

### **Suggested time:**

- Approximately one hour

### **Goals of the discussion:**

- To provide an opportunity for a discussion on the topic of U.S.-China relations and how the current state of those relations affects the attendees personally, their families, their jobs, their educational institutions, etc.
- To help participants synthesize and reflect on the content presented during the national webcast.
- To give attendees the opportunity to learn how other members of their community view the U.S.-China relationship.

### **Suggested Discussion/Conversation Outline:**

- Following the conclusion of the national webcast, facilitator introduces himself/herself.
- State the purpose of the town hall and the ground rules for discussion.

### **Minutes 05 – 20: Introductions and impressions**

- Ask attendees to introduce themselves and share their thoughts on the webcast.

Question prompts:

- What did you learn?
- What surprised you?
- Was there one speaker you particularly agreed or disagreed with?

### **Minutes 20 – 45: Open discussion**

- Move into broader topical questions on the U.S.-China relationship. You can find suggested questions on the next page.

### **Minutes 45 – 60: Wrap-up reflection**

Question prompts:

- Why does the U.S.-China relationship matter to you? Why should it matter to the community?
- How will you stay informed and engaged going forward?

### **Conclusion: Thank you and next steps**

- Thank participants for coming.
- Share that more reading materials and resources can be found on the National Committee's website. Participants can follow the National Committee to stay up to date on the U.S.-China relationship.
- If applicable, host shares upcoming relevant events at your institution/organization.

## 2. QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

### *China and Your Community*

In the past year, there have been increasing tensions in the U.S.-China relationship. Do you personally feel the impact of this? If so, in what ways?

The 2020 elections are quickly approaching. What role do you think U.S.-China relations will play in the elections? What China-related policies are you looking for in a candidate?

Visas have been called a new “weapon” in the U.S.-China relationship. Both Chinese and Americans have been denied visas on grounds of national security. What impact might this have on your institution?

*\*You can make this question more specific to higher education and international exchange if you are at a university.*

### *U.S.-China Relationship*

There have recently been reports of Chinese attempts to influence the perception of China in federal and state government, think tanks, university campuses, etc. As a result, some institutions have felt compelled to reexamine their engagement with China. How do you think these institutions should balance their engagement with China with considerations such as moral and ethical values or economic consequences? How do you recommend we balance staying vigilant without further perpetuating anti-China sentiment?

Previous administrations have referred to China as a “strategic partner.” Under the Trump administration, China has been called a “strategic competitor.” Which do you think most accurately describes the U.S. relationship with China? How does what the administration calls China change the nature of the way we view/interact with the country and its people?

Do you think that conflict is inevitable between a rising China and the United States? If not, how can this threat of conflict be mitigated?

Many of you lived through (or studied) the Cold War and the McCarthy era. Do you see any similarities between those times and today? Some believe that a new Cold War is emerging between the United States and China. Do you agree or disagree with this notion?

There are many differences in the systems of governance between the United States and China. Can two countries with different systems of governance work together or learn from each other? If so, what issues do you think would most benefit from Sino-American cooperation/collaboration? (Possible themes: climate change, pandemics, public commons; habitat conservation)

Recently, the NBA became a hot topic in U.S.-China relations after the general manager of the Rockets released a pro-Hong Kong tweet. The NBA responded by first releasing a statement calling this offense “regrettable” but the next day said that it would not regulate what players, employees and team owners say. What considerations does an organization such as the NBA weigh in deciding what action to take? What would you have done if you were in this position?

### **3. BEST PRACTICES FOR TOWN HALL AND DISCUSSION FACILITATION**

We know many CHINA Town Hall discussion facilitators have previous experience in this type of role. However, if you would like a refresher on how to facilitate a discussion, we have assembled a list of resources (publicly available on line) that we think are useful.

Brown University, The Harriet W. Sheridan Center for Teaching and Learning, *Tips on Facilitating Effective Group Discussions*, <https://www.brown.edu/sheridan/teaching-learning-resources/teaching-resources/classroom-practices/learning-contexts/discussions/tips>

GUIDE, Inc., *How to Organize a Town Hall Meeting: A Planning Guide*, <https://guideinc.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/Organizing-a-Town-Hall-Meeting.pdf>.

University of Waterloo, Center for Teaching Excellence, *Facilitating Effective Discussions*, <https://uwaterloo.ca/centre-for-teaching-excellence/teaching-resources/teaching-tips/alternatives-lecturing/discussions/facilitating-effective-discussions/>.

University of California, San Diego, *How to Facilitate Discussions*, <https://blink.ucsd.edu/HR/training/instructor/tools/discussions.html#3.-Guide-the-discussion>.