

# International Relationships & Activities

Sponsored Programs Perspective



# Why Now?

- ▶ Tension between national security and science -- by its nature open and international -- is nothing new.
  - ▶ But over the past year and a half, national security agencies, federal granting agencies, the White House and members of Congress have all signaled their increasing concern about international students or scholars who might seek to exploit the openness of the U.S. academic environment for their own -- or their nations' -- gain. And they're signaling that when it comes to the balance between scientific openness and national security -- and, to add a third dimension, economic competitiveness -- they're not happy with where that balance is being struck.
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# Developments During the Last 20 Months

- ▶ In December 2017, the White House released a national security strategy that floated for the first time the possibility of restrictions on visas for STEM students from certain nations to prevent the transfer of intellectual property to competitor countries.
- ▶ In February 2018, Federal Bureau of Investigation director Christopher Wray told the Senate intelligence committee that China is exploiting America's open research and development environment and that the intelligence threat from China would require "a whole-of-society response" involving not just the intelligence sector, but the academic and private sectors as well.
- ▶ Programs run by foreign governments aimed at recruiting diasporic or international academic talent -- most notably China's Thousand Talent program -- have also come under federal scrutiny.
- ▶ In January of this year, the Department of Energy, which funds research related to nuclear energy, issued a memo restricting employees and grantees from participating in foreign talent recruitment programs operated by countries deemed by the agency as "sensitive." A DOE official said the policy, which would affect talent programs operated by China, Iran, North Korea and Russia, has not yet been put in place.

## So What's the Real Issue?



\*Slide shared at September 2019 FDP Meeting in session "Foreign Implementation Discussion"

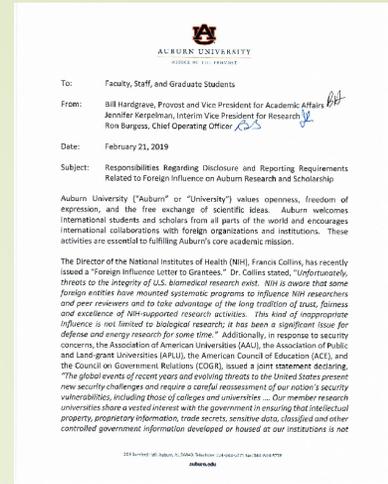


# What Are the Main Risks?

- ▶ **Integrity of Peer Review Process:** Sharing of confidential information on grant applications by NIH peer reviewers with others, including foreign entities, or otherwise attempting to influence funding decisions.
- ▶ **Failure to Fully Disclose Information:** Failure by some researchers to fully disclose substantial resources from other organizations, including foreign governments, financial conflicts of interest; appointments at foreign institutions, etc. in their grant proposals or institutionally required disclosures.
- ▶ **Compliance with Regulatory Requirements:** U.S. Export Control laws and regulations establish a set of requirements for transfer of technology and data to foreign countries and/or foreign national in the U.S., in addition sanctions from the Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) restrict interactions with individuals or entities on the sanctions list.
- ▶ **Loss of Intellectual Property (IP):** There have been a number of reported instances of unauthorized removal of data from research laboratories resulting in loss of intellectual property including publication of the inappropriately obtained data before U.S. scientists.

# Auburn University Response

- In February, 2019, a memo was shared with Faculty, Staff and Graduate Students related to “Responsibilities Regarding Disclosure and Reporting Requirements Related to Foreign Influence on Auburn Research and Scholarship”
- A new OVPRED web page is being developed to share the most recent information being released by federal agencies:
  - Foreign components of federally funded research should be disclosed on proposals, progress reports, and final technical reports.
  - AU researchers should ensure they disclose all applicable “Other Support” as required by federal sponsors.
  - Biosketches should be current and thorough.
  - Progress reports should indicate any change in support for Key Personnel that occurred over the last budget year.
  - Financial interests, including travel, must be disclosed in the AU COI System.
  - Foreign consulting and other outside business activities must be disclosed.



Questions?

