

Foreign Influence in Research



Quinton Johnson
Director, Export Compliance Program
Office of the Vice President for Research and Innovation
Virginia Commonwealth University

[U.S. NEWS](#)

Harvard's chemistry chair charged with lying about China contract

Federal agents allege the professor violated U.S. law by not disclosing the money he received to the Defense Department.

Jan. 28, 2020, 11:55 AM EST / Updated Jan. 28, 2020, 1:06 PM EST

American universities are a soft target for China's spies, say U.S. intelligence officials

NBC News 2/2/20

University of Texas professor Bo Mao is the latest defendant in a string of U.S. criminal cases alleging Chinese spying in the academic world.

House Republicans launch probe of Chinese involvement in U.S. higher education

Politico 5/4/20

Michael Lauer, NIH
Deputy Director for
Extramural Research.

140 Investigations, 'Dozens More' to Do

But "what's taken up the most amount of time has been the contact we've had now with over 70 institutions," said Lauer, involving some nearly 150 scientists who may have improper arrangements with foreign governments or have otherwise breached policies.

"We have done in-depth looks at over 140 scientists, and we have many more to go," Lauer said.

Of the 140, "75% or so had a real problem; that there was a substantial compliance issue," said Lauer. He added that NIH still has "dozens" of scientists to still investigate.

NIH has seen "examples of every single one of these: conflicts of commitment, duplications, diversion of intellectual property," said Lauer.

Fifty-four scientists have lost their jobs as a result of NIH probe into foreign ties

By Jeffrey Mervis | Jun. 12, 2020 , 6:00 PM

Some 54 scientists have resigned or been fired as a result of **an ongoing investigation** by the National Institutes of Health into the failure of NIH grantees to disclose financial ties to foreign governments. For 93% of the 189 scientists whom NIH has investigated to date, China was the source of their undisclosed support.

Science

- A researcher at Old Dominion University has collaborated on multiple research projects with Beihang University spanning at least six years, and one article was also coauthored by a researcher affiliated with an institute under the missile design and production facility CALT.

Hoover Institute
at Stanford

Issues as enumerated by the USG and Funding Agencies

- Disclosure of research support
- Diversion of intellectual property
- Sharing of confidential information by application peer reviewers
- Participation in foreign talent recruitment programs

VCU's Policies/Procedures

- Disclosure of research support
 - Financial COI
 - VCU's OPA [Policy](#)
- Diversion of intellectual property
 - TCPs and Confidentiality Agreements
 - Invention Disclosures
 - MTA/DUA Program
- Sharing of confidential information by application peer reviewers
- Participation in foreign talent recruitment programs
 - [Messaging and Awareness](#)
 - VCU OPA Policy

VCU Direct Response

- **International Affairs Security Workgroup**

- Goal: Assessing operations and working to prevent undue foreign influence through awareness
- Sponsors: Gail Hackett, Ph.D. and P. Srirama Rao, Ph.D.

- **Members**

- Dr. Jill Blondin, executive director (Global Education Office)
- Dr. McKenna Brown, special assistant for global initiatives (College of Humanities and Sciences)
- Dr. Charles Klink, senior vice provost for student affairs (Student Affairs)
- Dr. Ram Gupta, associate dean for faculty research and development and professor of chemical and life science engineering (College of Engineering)
- Dr. Edgar Rodas, associate professor of surgery (School of Medicine)
- Tina Cunningham, associate vice president for sponsored programs (Office of Research and Innovation)
- Quinton Johnson, director of export compliance office (Office of Research and Innovation)
- Jacqueline Kniska (group co-chair), chief ethics and compliance officer (Integrity and Compliance Office)
- Susan Robb (group co-chair), senior associate vice president for research compliance (Office of Research and Innovation)

Benchmarking Effort with APLU, COGR, other Institutions

- APLU [guidance](#) for universities
- Leadership commitment and faculty awareness were consistently listed as a key part of a robust foreign influence compliance effort

What Our Faculty Need to Know

- Disclose
 - [Financial Conflicts](#)
 - [Outside Professional Activities](#) (OPA)
 - [Other Support](#)
 - [Foreign Talent Programs](#)
- Keep Confidential
 - Any information marked as confidential, intellectual property Controlled Unclassified Information (CUI), and/or Export Controlled Information that is received through appropriate channels at VCU
- Monitor VCU's [International Activities Webpage](#) for updates

Resources

- [VCU's Webpage on International Activities](#)
- [APLU Report](#)
- [FBI PSA on Foreign Government Recruitment](#)
- [Science Article](#)

Questions

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We expect that a reinvigorated commitment to U.S. standards of research integrity and the tradition of open science by all stakeholders will drive continued preeminence of the United States in science, engineering, and technology by attracting and retaining the world's best talent. -- **Fundamental Research Security**
[JASON](#) report December 2019