



ACADEMIC SECURITY AND COUNTER EXPLOITATION PROGRAM

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DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE REACHES MILLION-DOLLAR SETTLEMENT WITH VAN ANDEL RESEARCH INSTITUTE TO RESOLVE ALLEGATIONS OF UNDISCLOSED FOREIGN TIES TO NIH GRANTS

U.S. Department of Justice / September 1, 2021

The Department of Justice ("DOJ") announced today that Van Andel Research Institute ("VARI" or the "Institute") has agreed to pay \$1.1 million to resolve allegations that it violated the False Claims Act by failing to disclose a foreign component of a National Institutes of Health ("NIH") award and by failing to disclose foreign research support for two VARI researchers who served as principal investigators on NIH awards. In addition to this settlement—the second settlement with VARI in two years involving allegations of undisclosed foreign influence in federally-sponsored research—NIH imposed Specific Award Conditions on all of VARI's NIH grants, including by requiring personal, executive-level certifications to the accuracy of NIH submissions, withdrawing certain of VARI's expanded grant authorities, and removing all of VARI's NIH grants from the Streamlined Non-Competing Award Process ("SNAP"). "Full disclosure is essential not only in validating scientific research, but also in the intense competition for scientific funding from the federal government," U.S. Attorney Andrew Birge said.

Read the full article [here](#).

WE CAN'T LET FOREIGN INFLUENCE COMPROMISE OUR UNIVERSITIES

Rachelle Peterson / National Review / September 7, 2021

Tucked inside the Innovation and Competition Act, recently passed by the Senate and now on the House's agenda, are crucial updates to foreign-gift transparency laws — and some big opportunities for improvement. The public should know when foreign donors make substantial gifts to colleges and universities. In the last few years, foreign governments have bought the right to pick curricula, as the Chinese Communist government did with Confucius Institutes. Royal-family foundations endow campus centers in their own names, as did Saudi Arabia's Prince Alwaleed bin Talal with \$20 million gifts to Harvard and Georgetown. Foreign tech companies such as Huawei and ZTE, both designated by the FCC as "national security threats," contract with colleges for research collaboration. Since the 1980s, colleges have been required to disclose gifts and contracts with foreign sources that exceed \$250,000 per year. But from the beginning, colleges and their lobbyists have fought that law, Section 117 of the Higher Education Act. Many institutions simply do not file the required disclosures.

Read the full article [here](#).



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CHINA BOUGHT INFLUENCE IN BOLLYWOOD, UNIVERSITIES, THINK-TANKS, TECH INDUSTRY: LAW AND SOCIETY ALLIANCE STUDY REPORT

Defence Capital | September 5, 2021

A research study has shown that China has lavishly spent huge sums of money to buy influence in India's film world, universities, social institutions, research think-tanks, social media, and the tech industry, posing a serious threat to national security and democracy. The 76-page Study Report titled 'Mapping Chinese Footprints and Influence Operation in India' released by the Law and Society Alliance on Sep.3 tries to identify how deep and extensive the Chinese foothold in India is. The report covers a wide range of topics and identifies key elements and ways in which Chinese intelligence services and the Chinese Communist Party government have entrenched themselves into various Indian sectors from the entertainment industry to academia. Besides highlighting the Indian industries and areas where China has over the years increased its influence through strategic investments, the report also touches upon Beijing's hidden agenda in increasing its influence to shape the opinion of the common man, the voters, in India.

Read the full article [here](#).

THE IMPACT OF TOP SCIENTISTS ON THE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT OF BASIC RESEARCH DIRECTED BY GOVERNMENT FUNDING: EVIDENCE FROM PROGRAM 973 IN CHINA

Jinyang Dong, Jiamou Liu, and Tiezhong Liu | *Scientometrics* | September 3, 2021

Basic research progress requires sustainable and healthy development of the academic community. This study aims to examine community development directed by research funding and the impact of top scientists on this development. To complement existing methods of measuring funding performance, which focus mostly on narrow factors such as citation or publications, we provide a new perspective that uses community development to describe the sustainability of both human capital and discipline development in basic research. The clique percolation method, instant-optimal method, and a community life-cycle model are used to describe the development of the academic community based on dynamic scientific collaboration networks. We enhance the existing community life-cycle model with a new stable event for a more realistic and comprehensive view of scientific collaboration.

Read the full article [here](#).

HIGHER EDUCATION AND PUBLIC GOOD IN EAST AND WEST

Simon Marginson and Lili Yang | *The Promise of Higher Education* | September 2, 2021

The 70th year of the IAU has been marked not only by the Covid-19 pandemic but by the geopolitical tension between the United States and China. After almost four decades of cooperation, which began in shared opposition to Soviet Russia and a shared interest in China's modernisation, the leaders of each country have become strident critics of the other. The escalating war of words has led to disruptions in trade, communications and visas and now threatens the vast and fruitful cooperation between universities and researchers. Much is at stake. Many US universities are in China, such as Stanford with its state-of-the-art centre at Peking University and NYU with a branch campus in Shanghai. Chinese universities benefit from visits in both directions, from bench-marking using American partner templates and from the return of US-trained doctoral graduates. US-China links in science are focused on crucial areas like biomedicine and epidemiology, planetary science and ecology, engineering, materials, energy, cybernetics.

Read the full article [here](#).

UPDATE TO AUSTRALIA'S FOREIGN INTERFERENCE GUIDELINES FOR UNIVERSITIES COULD FUEL PREJUDICE AGAINST CHINESE, ACADEMICS WARN

John Power / South China Morning Post / September 2, 2021

A planned revision of guidelines for Australian universities to guard against interference by foreign actors including China has sparked controversy within the tertiary sector, with some academics fearing the arrival of "Red Scare" paranoia on campuses. The Australian government and universities are working to update anti-foreign interference guidelines that were introduced in 2019 amid heightened scrutiny of Chinese influence on university campuses. Although the updated guidelines have not been finalised, draft proposals reportedly include measures such as training students to recognise foreign meddling and report it to the appropriate authorities. Nick Bisley, dean and head of the School of Humanities and Social Science at La Trobe University in Melbourne, said he and many of his peers were concerned the government was overreaching in its efforts to tackle foreign interference.

Read the full article [here](#).

U.S. INSTITUTIONS MUST GET SMARTER ABOUT CHINESE COMMUNIST PARTY MONEY

Joshua Elsenman and Michael Sobolik / Foreign Policy / August 31, 2021

In June, the George H.W. Bush Foundation for U.S.-China Relations honored California Sen. Dianne Feinstein and former U.S. Secretary of State Henry Kissinger with lifetime achievement awards for their contributions to U.S.-China relations. "I'm grateful to accept this award from the Bush China Foundation," Feinstein said. But what she did not seem to know was more than 85 percent of the foundation's operating budget—a total donation of \$5 million—came from the China-United States Exchange Foundation (CUSEF), an organization controlled by the Chinese Communist Party (CCP). Amid the intensifying strategic rivalry between the United States and China, the CCP is increasingly using cash to infiltrate influential U.S. institutions using tactics broadly known as foreign-focused propaganda and United Front influence campaigns. These activities trace back to the party's creation in 1921, when it began "educating the masses" and "mobilizing friends to strike at enemies."

Read the full article [here](#).

UNIVERSITY STUDENTS WILL BE TRAINED TO SPOT FOREIGN INTERFERENCE

Lisa Visentin / The Sydney Morning Herald / August 31, 2021

University students will be trained to spot foreign interference threats on campus and report them to authorities under proposed new rules aimed at significantly beefing up universities' responsibilities for countering Chinese government influence on campuses. Academics and students involved in research collaborations with overseas institutions will also get specific training on how to "recognise, mitigate and handle concerns of foreign interference", following security agencies' concerns about critical research being stolen. The measures are contained in new draft foreign interference guidelines for universities, which are being furiously debated among university leaders and government officials. The federal government has already been forced to review a key element of the guidelines, which would have required all academics to disclose their membership of foreign political parties over the past decade, following a fierce backlash from university chiefs.

Read the full article [here](#).



CHINA'S NEW DATA SECURITY LAW WILL PROVIDE IT EARLY NOTICE OF EXPLOITABLE ZERO DAYS

Brad D. Williams | Breaking Defense | September 1, 2021

China's new Data Security Law, which takes effect today, includes cyber vulnerability disclosure provisions that will provide its government with nearly exclusive early access to a steady stream of zero-day vulnerabilities — potentially to include those discovered in technologies used by the Defense Department and Intelligence Community. Armed with that information, experts fear, China could exploit cyber vulnerabilities in tech used broadly across the US public and private sectors. The DSL's vulnerability disclosure provisions are a concern given both China's recent behavior and its activities in cyberspace over the past two decades. The Microsoft Exchange hacking campaign earlier this year entailed exploiting four zero-day vulnerabilities in the Redmond, Wash., tech giant's widely used email server software. Zero-day vulnerabilities are security flaws that are not publicly known and therefore have no available patch. Microsoft was eventually alerted to the Exchange vulnerabilities, issued patches, and attributed the campaign to a Chinese threat actor dubbed HAFNIUM, but not before 140,000 US organizations were exposed — and some percentage of those compromised by multiple threat actors, prior to and after the vulnerabilities' disclosure. The Pentagon's networks were reportedly not affected. The Exchange campaign — which the US officially attributed to China in July — is just the latest known in a multi-decade Chinese cyberespionage initiative against the US government and American companies, which a congressional commission estimated to cost hundreds of billions of dollars annually and has been characterized by a former National Security Agency chief as "the greatest transfer of wealth in history."

Read the full article [here](#).

BEST PRACTICES: NATIONAL SUPPLY CHAIN INTEGRITY MONTH

National Counterintelligence and Security Center

Looking for the very basics of supply chain risk management for your organization? Check out the following best practices condensed into a single page.

Read the full article [here](#).

UNIVERSITIES PUSH BACK ON PLAN TO REQUIRE ACADEMICS TO DECLARE FOREIGN POLITICAL LINKS

Lisa Visentin | The Sydney Morning Herald | September 1, 2021

Universities are pushing to limit the number of academics required to disclose their membership of overseas political parties under proposed new foreign interference measures as the government refuses to abandon the requirement entirely. The move to force academics to reveal their overseas political affiliations is the most controversial element of draft foreign interference guidelines for the sector, with the federal government agreeing last week to redraft the proposal following a fierce backlash from university chiefs. But university sources, who spoke on the condition of anonymity about the confidential discussions, said it was expected the political disclosure requirements would be retained in some form in the final document. "There is no way government is letting this go," one source close to the consultation process said. "We don't have an issue with transparency, but we have concerns with the way the disclosure questions are framed. The question has to be proportionate to the research academics are doing and the field they are in." Academics are already required to declare conflicts of interest for sensitive research, and the Australian Research Council began asking applicants to declare overseas political memberships for the first time in the latest funding round.

Read the full article [here](#).

TO COMPETE WITH CHINA, TAKE A PAGE FROM THE REAGAN PLAYBOOK

Nathan Hitchen | The Bulwark | September 2, 2021

If the United States is to take the initiative in its great power competition with China, we should study America's last victorious grand strategy. The Reagan administration moved the Cold War to its endgame by taking the initiative through measures short of warfare, and that era's technology competition holds lessons relevant for a strategy of geoeconomics today. At stake in the Sino-American rivalry is who gets to tilt the table of the twenty-first century and slide trillions of dollars of prosperity and international political influence toward a center of gravity in Beijing or Washington.

Read the full article [here](#).

PRO-PRC INFLUENCE CAMPAIGN EXPANDS TO DOZENS OF SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS, WEBSITES, AND FORUMS IN AT LEAST SEVEN LANGUAGES, ATTEMPTED TO PHYSICALLY MOBILIZE PROTESTERS IN THE U.S.

Ryan Serabian and Lee Foster | FireEye | September 8, 2021

In June 2019, Mandiant Threat Intelligence first reported to customers a pro-People's Republic of China (PRC) network of hundreds of inauthentic accounts on Twitter, Facebook, and YouTube, that was at that time primarily focused on discrediting pro-democracy protests in Hong Kong. Since then, the broader activity set has rapidly expanded in size and scope and received widespread public attention following Twitter's takedown of related accounts in August 2019. Numerous other researchers have published investigations into various aspects of this activity set, including Google's Threat Analysis Group, Graphika, the Australian Strategic Policy Institute, the Stanford Internet Observatory and the Hoover Institution, and the Centre for Information Resilience.

Read the full report [here](#).

HOW CHINESE COMPANIES FACILITATE TECHNOLOGY TRANSFER FROM THE UNITED STATES

Sean O'Connor | U.S-China Economic and Security Review Commission | May 6, 2019

Chinese companies—in many cases with the backing of the Chinese government—use a variety of methods to acquire valuable technology, intellectual property (IP), and knowhow from U.S. firms. Some of these tactics are legal, while others involve coercive or covert means. Although Chinese companies are not the only foreign firms seeking to acquire U.S. technology, the Chinese case is unique because the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) has prioritized technology transfer as a matter of policy and provides direct and indirect support to companies engaging in these anticompetitive activities.

Read the full report [here](#).

THE TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY SYSTEM

*The Academic Security and Counter Exploitation Program is coordinated by The Texas A&M University System Research Security Office as a service to the academic community.
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