



ACADEMIC SECURITY AND COUNTER EXPLOITATION PROGRAM

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THE OPEN SOURCE MEDIA SUMMARY

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THE COUNTRIES MAINTAINING RESEARCH TIES WITH RUSSIA DESPITE UKRAINE

Smriti Mallapaty, T. V. Padma, Emiliano Rodríguez Mega, Richard Van Noorden, and Ehsan Masood
Nature | April 6, 2022

Is Russia's invasion of Ukraine redrawing the map of international scientific cooperation? Whereas Europe and the United States are swiftly moving to cut long-standing ties, the governments of China, India and South Africa are maintaining links. They are members of the BRICS, a group of five countries — including Brazil and Russia — that work together to promote trade and economic development, and have an active programme of scientific cooperation. Last year, researchers from the 5 nations organized some 100 meetings under the BRICS umbrella in a spectrum of fields including astronomy, climate and energy, health and medicine. Vaccines are an important focus. India and South Africa are leading a campaign for intellectual-property relief on COVID-19 vaccines during the pandemic. Last month, all five governments announced a new partnership on vaccines research and development at a launch event on 22 March attended by science and health ministers. In a statement, Russia's health minister, Mikhail Murashko, said the initiative would build on the first COVID-19 vaccines, which were developed and tested in BRICS countries. Russia approved its first coronavirus vaccine in August 2020.

Read the full article [here](#).

CHINA SECURED \$120 MILLION IN CONTRACTS WITH US UNIVERSITIES IN 2021, RECORDS SHOW

Joe Schoffstall | Fox News | April 12, 2022

China-based entities, including the Chinese government, secured \$120 million in contracts with American colleges in 2021, federal data reveals. The Chinese institutions entered into agreements ranging from \$105,000 to \$31 million with more than two dozen universities, a search of the College Foreign Gift and Contract Report database shows. The federal records, however, contain minimal details on the arrangements, such as the private Chinese entities involved and the specifics of the contracts. China, which has cozied up to higher education in the United States, enters into the agreements to "gain influence and spread its propaganda into the universities," Rep. Virginia Foxx, the top Republican on the House Education and Labor Committee, told Fox News. "China's ultimate goal is to control education," the North Carolina congresswoman said. "And once you control education, you control a culture." The University of Houston reported the largest monetary contract with a Chinese entity last year, the records show. Houston inked a nearly \$32 million agreement with an unreported private source.

Read the full article [here](#).



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JURY CONVICTS UNIVERSITY OF KANSAS RESEARCHER FOR HIDING TIES TO CHINESE GOVERNMENT

U.S. Department of Justice | April 7, 2022

A former University of Kansas (KU) professor was today convicted by a federal jury on three counts of wire fraud and one count of false statements after he deliberately concealed that he was also employed by a government-affiliated university in the People's Republic of China (PRC), while working on U.S. government funded research at KU. Feng Tao, aka Franklin Tao, 50, of Lawrence, Kansas, worked as a full-time professor at KU. According to court documents and evidence presented at trial, in 2018, Tao accepted a position with Fuzhou University in China that designated him as a Changjiang Scholar Distinguished Professor. The position's guidelines required him to be a full-time employee of Fuzhou University. The Kansas Board of Regents (KBOR) required faculty to file annual reports to notify of any outside employment that did or could impact duties as a conflict of interest. Tao didn't seek permission from KU before entering the agreement with Fuzhou University, didn't notify KU about the employment, and lied to conceal the employment.

Read the full article [here](#).

CHINA-US CLIMATE COLLABORATION ENDED DUE TO SECURITY CONCERN

Natalia Mesa | The Scientist | April 12, 2022

In December 2021, Texas A&M shuttered a climate research partnership with a Chinese university over potential security concerns, outlets reported last week. The International Laboratory for High-Resolution Earth System Prediction (iHESP) was a climate modeling lab run as a partnership between Texas A&M, the National Center for Atmospheric Research (NCAR) in Colorado, and the Qingdao Pilot National Laboratory for Marine Science and Technology in China. The collaboration, which began in 2018, aimed to share supercomputing resources and technical expertise among the three institutions. The arrangement was slated to end in 2023, but Texas A&M unexpectedly terminated it in December 2021, citing concerns that it might lead to the theft of technological information, reports The Chronicle of Higher Education. The lab, which is split among the three campuses, uses supercomputers to run complex climate modeling simulations and provide more accurate predictions for future climate studies.

Read the full article [here](#).

TEXAS A&M CLIMATE LAB, OTHER AGREEMENTS ENDED IN WAKE OF QUESTIONS OVER CHINA TIES

Samantha Ketterer and Kristoffer Tigue | Houston Chronicle | April 7, 2022

U.S. Sen. Marco Rubio in February mailed letters to 22 U.S. universities: Cut ties with Chinese institutions that have previously "ensnared" scholars in schemes to steal valuable information, he wrote. China's military, he said, is attempting to acquire and develop cutting-edge technology, sometimes through theft under the guise of academic collaboration. Texas A&M University and its governing system responded one day later with a letter to the Florida senator. They had already "mitigated" or eliminated 200 "instances of activity" with evidence of foreign influence, according to the letter written by administrators. The system coordinates with the FBI on a "near daily basis," the administrators said. And one affiliation that Rubio specifically questioned - Ocean University in Qingdao - is being severed, according to the letter. The correspondence provides the clearest picture to date on the Texas A&M University System's attempts to extensively monitor other countries' involvement in its research.

Read the full article [here](#).

WHAT THE LIEBER VERDICT SAYS, AND DOESN'T SAY, ABOUT FUTURE PROBES OF SCHOLARS' TIES TO CHINA

Karin Fischer | *The Chronicle of Higher Education* | December 27, 2021

A federal jury took fewer than three hours to find Charles M. Lieber, a former chairman of Harvard University's chemistry department, guilty of lying to U.S. government officials about his ties to China. Lieber, whom federal prosecutors painted as chasing money and scientific prestige, was one of the highest profile academics charged under the China Initiative, the U.S. Department of Justice's probe of academic and economic espionage. Yet his conviction does little to resolve the fate of the controversial investigation, which has come under increasing criticism for its chilling effect on international scientific collaboration — including by a former U.S. attorney who previously led Lieber's prosecution. "Guilt is individual," said Margaret K. Lewis, a law professor at Seton Hall University who focuses on China and Taiwan. "This case was about Lieber's individual behavior, and that was what the jury was required to decide, not give a ruling on the China Initiative as broader government policy."

Read the full article [here](#).

THE LONG-TERM STAY RATES OF INTERNATIONAL STEM PHD GRADUATES

Jack Corrigan, James Dunham, and Remco Zwetsloot | Center for Security and Emerging Technology
April 2022

This issue brief examines how many international STEM PhD graduates choose to stay in the United States after earning their degrees and explores how those graduates navigate the U.S. immigration system. Our analysis is based on data collected through the National Science Foundation's (NSF) Survey of Doctorate Recipients (SDR), a survey that collects information on the demographics and employment trends of PhD graduates from U.S. universities. We found that a large majority of foreign nationals who earn STEM PhDs in the United States remain in the country many years after graduating. Specifically, we found that long-term stay rates are high. As of February 2017, roughly 77 percent of the more than 178,000 international STEM PhD graduates from U.S. universities between 2000 and 2015 were still living in the country. Stay rates remain high even among older graduates. Since 2000, at least 65 percent of every year's graduating class has stayed in the United States, and since 2004, no graduating class has had a stay rate below 73 percent. Stay rates are similar across STEM fields. Though stay rates for different fields vary across individual years, no one STEM discipline has consistently higher or lower stay rates than the others.

Read the full article [here](#).

NEW GENETIC RESEARCH RULES: WHAT IMPACT ON COLLABORATION?

Yojana Sharma | *University World News* | April 7, 2022

New regulatory guidelines on ethical genetic research in fields that require research use of human and animal genetic resources have been released by the Chinese government. The move comes several years after Chinese scientist He Jiankui was sentenced to three years in prison for breaching ethical guidelines to create the world's first gene-edited babies, which triggered a global scientific backlash against China's unethical research practices. Although some new guidelines were issued, as research ethics rose up the national political agenda following the 2018 He case, the latest draft regulations released by the General Office of the Chinese Communist Party and the State Council, or China's cabinet, at the end of March are intended to "strengthen the research on relevant laws in key areas such as life sciences, medicine and artificial intelligence" by 2025, the official Xinhua news agency reported.

Read the full article [here](#).

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THE CHINA INITIATIVE AND ITS IMPLICATIONS FOR AMERICAN UNIVERSITIES – ANALYSIS

Foreign Policy Research Institute | Eurasia Review | April 12, 2022

In a speech on Chinese threats to U.S. national security on January 31, the Director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation Christopher Wray emphasized ongoing attempts by the People's Republic of China to spy on American companies and steal their research. Emphasizing the scale of the PRC's criminal activities, Wray explained that the FBI has opened "over 2,000 [investigations] ... focused on the Chinese government trying to steal our information or technology" and that the bureau is "constantly opening new cases to counter [Chinese] intelligence operations about every twelve hours or so." Although not mentioned by name, many, if not all, of these cases were tied to a campaign known as the China Initiative launched by the Department of Justice in 2018 to prosecute cases of Chinese economic espionage and theft of intellectual property. However, within a month of Director Wray's speech, the Assistant Attorney General for National Security Matthew Olson came out to announce the end of the China Initiative, leading some to cheer and others to criticize the sudden change in policy.

Read the full article [here](#).

FORTIFYING U.S. INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY (ICT) SUPPLY CHAINS

U.S. Department of Homeland Security | 2022

This National Counterintelligence and Security Center (NCSC) Supply Chain Spotlight focuses on counterintelligence (CI) and security concerns highlighted in the stated risks to the U.S. Information and Communications Technology (ICT) supply chain from the joint Secretary of Commerce-Secretary of Homeland Security one-year ICT Supply Chain Report (Report). This report was developed in response to E.O. 14017, America's Supply Chains, which identified the ICT supply chain as critical to ensuring our economic prosperity and national security. Above all other supply chains, the ICT supply chain supports other critical supply chains, which is why it remains a high-value target for nation-state actors. Sending ICT hardware manufacturing offshore creates multiple security vulnerabilities to the ICT supply chain. The Report states that ICT hardware manufacturing is primarily outsourced to and concentrated in Asian countries, particularly China.

Read the full article [here](#).

COLLEGES SCRAMBLE TO RECRUIT STUDENTS AS ENROLMENT PLUNGES

Nick Anderson and Danielle Douglas-Gabriel | University World News | April 5, 2022

Colleges across America face a daunting challenge: Their student head count has shrunk more than 5% since 2019, according to a national estimate, as debate over the value of higher education intensified during the public health crisis and economic tumult, write Nick Anderson and Danielle Douglas-Gabriel for The Washington Post. That's an enrolment loss of nearly one million students. Some drifted out of college, while others never started. Many colleges are on an urgent quest to keep current students and recover their lost freshmen. At stake are not only the education and career prospects of huge numbers of young adults, but also the financial health of regional colleges and universities. Once students leave, they often don't return. Gap years can become permanent. "How do we get these people to come back — especially in a strong job market?" asked Courtney Brown, a vice president with the Lumina Foundation, based in Indianapolis, which promotes learning beyond high school. Privileged universities are weathering the upheaval, Brown said. "It's everybody else that is hurting."

Read the full article [here](#).

FIVE WAYS TO PROTECT AN ORGANIZATION FROM A NATION-STATE ATTACK

James Turgal | SC Media | March 31, 2022

For many organizations undergoing a risk assessment, the threat of a nation-state attack never even enters the conversation. The reason? Many have a widespread misconception that nation-state actors only target the largest of enterprises that have the most money and the most data to exploit. Thus, many companies believe they don't have anything to offer these adversaries, so they are safe from attack. But they're wrong. Nation-states are constantly looking for new revenue streams and ways to compete with U.S. technology, data and IP advancements – and corporate cyberattacks are an easy, cheap way for them to execute on both goals. Possessing any one of these desirable assets means any company – regardless of size or industry – presents itself as a target. And, even companies that don't have any proprietary technology, IP or financial/customer data valuable to these adversaries can land in the crossfire through third-party/supply chain attacks. The bottom line: no company is safe from the threat of nation-state attacks and security teams should make defending against them an important part of any organization's risk assessment and cybersecurity strategy.

Read the full article [here](#).

IN THE MAD RUSH TO DISENGAGE, WE JOIN IN PUTIN'S EXTREMISM

Philip G Altbach and Hans de Wit | University World News | April 2, 2022

The damage resulting from Russia's war on Ukraine appears to include the loss of rationality among segments of the academic community in North America and Europe. In their rush to disengage from all things Russian, academics, universities, publishers, scientific organisations and governments are cutting ties with everything and everyone. We have argued why engagement with Russian colleagues and knowledge of Russia are essential at this point in time. Within the academic community, colleagues are now advocating against, or even cancelling, courses dealing with Russian society, history and culture. This is precisely what should be avoided. Knowledge of Russia is more crucial than ever – not to mention that it is one of the world's great civilisations, regardless of what Mr. Vladimir Putin is doing to it today. While it is difficult to make sense of public opinion in Putin's increasingly authoritarian Russia, much of the Russian academic community opposes the war and values international relationships.

Read the full article [here](#).

WHEN A SCHOLAR IS ACCUSED OF BEING A SPY - HOW INVESTIGATIONS PLAY OUT AT DIFFERENT UNIVERSITIES REVEALS A LOT ABOUT HIGHER EDUCATION

Karin Fischer | The Chronicle of Higher Education | October 27, 2021

Just after the new year, prosecutors charged a Massachusetts Institute of Technology professor named Gang Chen with allegedly concealing his ties to China. His arrest was part of the "China Initiative," a federal investigation into economic and academic espionage. A little more than a week later, L. Rafael Reif, MIT's president, released a statement pushing back against a core allegation in the criminal complaint against Chen, that he had personally pocketed nearly \$20 million in payments from a Chinese university. No, Reif wrote, MIT had an agreement with Southern University of Science and Technology for joint research and educational activities, and the funds were paid to the institute. The charge was dropped from the official indictment. In the months since, MIT has not commented on Chen's case and declined to talk with The Chronicle about the investigation. But in Reif's statement, he referred to Chen as a member of the MIT "family"; the university is paying the professor's legal bills.

Read the full article [here](#).

HOW UNIVERSITY RESEARCH LANDED ON THE FRONT LINES OF THE FIGHT WITH CHINA

Lindsay Ellis and Nell Gluckman | *The Chronicle of Higher Education* | May 31, 2019

The email sparked panic. "Effective immediately, the Johns Hopkins School of Medicine is temporarily halting the appointment of visiting scientists," wrote a medical-school administrator to the neurology department last fall. Researchers who saw it felt they knew what it was really about: China. The country wasn't named, but excerpts of the message rippled through Chinese social media, newspapers, and websites. The implications were devastating: Here was one of the most prominent medical schools in the United States, banning scientists from a crucial research partner out of a fear that they would steal ideas or — worse — that they could be spies. Johns Hopkins administrators were dismayed for a more immediate reason. The email was inaccurate, announcing a policy that didn't exist, a spokeswoman for the medical school told *The Chronicle*. "The whole thing was a nightmare for us." But this "nightmare" did not come out of the blue. It was easy for some to believe the Hopkins email was a real policy change as tensions mounted between the two countries. Reports of sensitive information ending up in China had appeared in the news earlier in the year.

Read the full article [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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