

FOREIGN INFLUENCE AND NASA FUNDING

**NASA Office of Inspector General
Office of Investigations**

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NASA OIG's Authority and Mission

- Inspector General Act of 1978
- Mission:
 - Prevent, identify, and stop fraud, waste and abuse and recommend corrective action;
 - Promote economy and efficiency; and
 - Report findings to Congress and the public.
- Office of Investigations:
 - NASA OIG Special Agents are sworn federal law enforcements officers authorized to make arrests, carry concealed firearms, take sworn statements, conduct surveillance and undercover operations, and execute search warrants in performance of their duties.



NASA's China (PRC) Funding Restriction

- Public Law became effective April 25, 2011
- NASA is restricted by specified application of the Acts from using funding appropriated in the Acts to enter into or fund any grant or cooperative agreement of any kind to participate, collaborate, or coordinate bilaterally in any way with China or any Chinese-owned company, at the prime recipient level or at any subrecipient level, whether the bilateral involvement is funded or performed under a no-exchange of funds arrangement
- Applies to grants and cooperative agreements that include bilateral participation, collaboration, or coordination with Chinese universities
 - https://prod.nais.nasa.gov/pub/pub_library/grantnotices/gic12-01A.html



Foreign Influence Investigations

- Department of Justice's China initiative:
 - About 80 percent of all economic espionage prosecutions brought by the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) allege conduct that would benefit the Chinese state, and there is at least some nexus to China in around 60 percent of all trade secret theft cases.
 - National Security Strategy
 - <https://www.justice.gov/opa/information-about-department-justice-s-china-initiative-and-compilation-china-related>
- China's Talent Recruitment Plans:
 - Over 200 talent recruitment plans
 - These plans help facilitate technology transfer
 - Most prominent is the Thousand Talent Plan
 - <https://www.hsgac.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/2019-11-18%20PSI%20Staff%20Report%20-%20China's%20Talent%20Recruitment%20Plans%20Updated.pdf>



Case Examples

- Harvard University Professor Indicted on False Statement Charges
 - It is alleged that, unbeknownst to Harvard University, beginning in 2011, Dr. Charles Lieber became a “Strategic Scientist” at Wuhan University of Technology (WUT) in China. He later became contractual participant in China’s Thousand Talents Plan from at least 2012 through 2015.
 - <https://www.justice.gov/opa/pr/harvard-university-professor-indicted-false-statement-charges>
- University of Arkansas Professor Indicted for Wire Fraud and Passport Fraud
 - Mr. Simon Saw-Teong Ang is alleged to have demonstrated neither when he failed to disclose his financial and other ties to companies and institutions in China to the University of Arkansas and to U.S. government agencies, despite an obligation to do so.
 - <https://www.justice.gov/opa/pr/university-arkansas-professor-indicted-wire-fraud-and-passport-fraud>



Potential Red Flags (Talent Contracts)

- Funding and Acknowledgments to Foreign Universities/Government Programs
- Co-Publishers from Same Foreign Institutions
- Sponsorship of Students from Same Foreign Universities
- Foreign Travel consistent with terms of Talent Contracts
- Ambiguous disclosures made with US institution about outside activities
- Information found in foreign language but not English – Sometimes the first level of encryption

Disclaimer: *Independently, these items do not necessarily indicate nefarious activity.*



Questions and Contact Information

National Aeronautics and Space Administration



It's Your Tax Money

Report Crime, Fraud, Waste, and Abuse



NASA Inspector General Hotline:
1-800-424-9183
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