

United States Senate

December 3, 2019

Dear University President:

Thank you for your ongoing commitment to providing students with a world-class education. Florida continues to be a leader in higher education, thanks to your hard work and dedication. We have the second lowest state university tuition in the nation, and for three years in a row, *U.S. News & World Report* has rated Florida's higher education system as the best in the nation. We have invested in Florida's state-of-the-art research programs that continue to thrive, thanks to outstanding innovation, transparency and collaboration.

We know the many benefits that come with research-sharing with other universities across the globe, but we must also be aware of the risks. There are countries that are actively trying to exploit your hard work and take credit for your successes. Criminal activities like this damage the integrity of your research and threaten our nation's economic and national security.

The most obvious threat is Communist China. The growing influence of Communist China presents a clear and present danger to the stability of world markets, to the security of the United States and our allies, and to the quest for freedom and democracy around the globe. We know Communist China is stealing our technology and trying to compete with us on the global stage. We should all be greatly concerned about what is happening in Communist China as they continue to take steps to try to "win" the great power conflict of the 21st Century.

I recently participated in a Senate Homeland Security & Governmental Affairs Committee hearing titled *Securing the U.S. Research Enterprise from China's Talent Recruitment Plans*, and the information presented was extremely concerning. Communist China's talent recruitment plans pose a significant risk to our research enterprise and our economic and national security. They are stealing our information to ultimately use against us, and we cannot allow this to continue.

I write today to request information on the specific steps you have taken at your university to safeguard our technology and our intellectual property from foreign influence:

1. Is your university aware of any researcher who has failed to disclose their participation in a Chinese-funded talent requirement program?

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- a. Have you identified any faculty member or university employee that has shared unauthorized information with a foreign entity?
 - i. If so, what steps have you taken to hold that faculty member or university employee accountable?
2. Please explain your requirements for faculty members and university employees to disclose all research activities and all financial conflicts of interest and conflicts of commitment as it relates to foreign entities.
 - a. Does your university disclose this information to the federal government?
 - b. How has your university coordinated with the Department of Homeland Security, the State Department, and the Federal Bureau of Investigation; especially in terms of engaging with federal law enforcement to help identify threats to your university?
 - c. What penalties are in place at your university for those who are suspected of espionage?

We understand the importance of conducting collaborative research, but U.S. businesses and universities must protect their information from Communist China. We cannot take this threat lightly.

I look forward to your responses and your prompt attention to this matter. I look forward to continuing to work with you to protect our universities and our students from the threat of foreign influence.

Sincerely,



Rick Scott
United States Senator

cc: Mr. Marshall Criser III, Chancellor, State University System