



COMMITTEE ON

**SCIENCE, SPACE, AND TECHNOLOGY**

REPUBLICANS Frank Lucas, Ranking Member

## **Opening Statement of Ranking Member Frank Lucas**

As Prepared for the Record

Joint Investigations & Oversight, Research & Technology Subcommittees Hearing –  
“Balancing Open Science and Security in the U.S. Research Enterprise

*October 5, 2021*

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Thank you, Chairman Foster, Ranking Member Obernolte, Chairwoman Stevens, and Ranking Member Waltz, for holding today’s joint subcommittee hearing on balancing open science with securing the U.S. research enterprise from foreign influence and theft.

The foundation of U.S. competitiveness is our thriving scientific enterprise. The integrity of this system relies on the core principles and values of science: openness and transparency, accountability and honesty, impartiality and objectivity, respect, freedom of inquiry, reciprocity, and merit-based competition. While international collaboration and foreign contributions are critical to U.S. competitiveness, we must take steps to protect the integrity of its research and uphold these principles.

This hearing continues the House Science Committee’s leadership on this important issue. For more than three years, the Science Committee has led development of legislation to address the growing threat from the People’s Republic of China (PRC) and other foreign actors who seek to exploit our open system of science. We have also worked to ensure that Congress doesn’t take actions that have the unintended consequence of making the U.S. less competitive in the global marketplace.

In early 2018, Congress was first warned of the growing threat of academic espionage in testimony by FBI Director Christopher Wray to the Senate Intelligence Committee. Wray testified, “The use of nontraditional collectors, especially in the academic setting, whether it’s professors, scientists, students, we see in almost every field office that the FBI has around the country. It’s not just in major cities. It’s in small ones as well. It’s across basically every discipline. I think the level of naiveté on the part of the academic sector about this creates its own issues. They’re exploiting the very open research and development environment that we have, which we all revere, but they’re taking advantage of it.”

Following that warning, the Science Committee developed the Securing American Science and Technology Act, which became law as part of the National Defense

Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2020. The legislation established an interagency committee within the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy (OSTP) to coordinate research security across the federal government. The bill also established the National Science, Technology, and Security Roundtable at the National Academy of Sciences, to facilitate collaboration between universities, federal agencies, law enforcement, and other stakeholders.

I'm pleased that in response to this legislation, OSTP released National Security Presidential Memorandum-33 in January 2021 to direct a national response to safeguard the security and integrity of America's R&D enterprise. I understand that the Biden Administration is currently undertaking a 90-day review of NSPM-33, and I hope that Administration will uphold the memorandum, while providing further refinement and clarify for stakeholders.

Under this committee's bipartisan leadership, we continue to move legislation that ensures consistent policies for disclosure, training, and participation in talent programs across the federal government.

While we are still trying to understand the full scope of the threat from the PRC, we do have some evidence that it continues to grow. Last summer, Director Wray disclosed that the FBI is opening a new PRC-related counterintelligence case about every 10 hours and that, of the nearly 5,000 active FBI counterintelligence cases currently underway across the country, almost half are related to PRC.

While academic cases are only a small fraction of those, with criminal charges against college and university professors through the Justice Department making up only 3 percent of all economic espionage prosecutions, we will hear today from our witnesses about the growing case-loads at our federal research agencies and universities as it relates to grant fraud associated with the PRC. I look forward to hearing more about the complexities of the relationship between economic espionage, grant fraud, and foreign influence, and how we manage and mitigate them.

In closing, I want to be clear – the Science Committee's focus on research security and the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) is about safeguarding the integrity of the U.S. research enterprise and ensuring that all scientists follow the U.S. principles of scientific fairness and integrity, not targeting researchers of a particular racial or ethnic background.

We must do all we can to protect our innovation system and taxpayer-funded research from systematic attempts to exploit, degrade, and misappropriate our open system of science. But we do not want close off legitimate international collaboration or discourage students and researchers from coming to the United States to study or conduct their research here. We must continue to be a beacon for the freedom of

thought and ideas that has led to some of the greatest scientific discoveries in the history of the world.

I thank Chairwoman Johnson for being a partner with me on these issues, and I look forward to hearing from our expert panel of witness.