

U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
SELECT COMMITTEE ON THE STRATEGIC COMPETITION BETWEEN THE UNITED STATES AND THE CHINESE
COMMUNIST PARTY

Protecting American Innovation: The Federal Research Security Enterprise

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Questions for the Record

Questions submitted by Representative Dan Newhouse (WA-04), Select Committee on China

- 1. Universities such as Washington State University—which have campuses in my district—have invested substantial time and resources to comply with NSPM-33, CHIPS and Science Act requirements, research security training mandates, foreign influence disclosures, cybersecurity requirements, and talent recruitment program restrictions. What additional actions is your agency planning to mandate, and what specific measures does Congress need to implement that your agency cannot on its own?**

NSF recognizes the significant investments research organizations have made and continue to make in shoring up their research security capabilities. NSF is focused on providing as much transparency and clarity as possible to facilitate compliance. NSF's impending prohibition on collaboration with restricted entities is designed to set clear expectations for researchers and organizations on what NSF considers unacceptable risk. This impending new policy is NSF's primary focus in terms of upcoming mandates.

One of the areas where Congress could be most helpful is in providing increased authorities for information sharing among agencies. This would allow NSF to alert its agency partners of identified concerns and to work together to better assess and mitigate the risk.

- 2. Are our institutions (universities and other external partners) maintaining necessary compliance infrastructure and upholding federal research security standards?**

Research security is a rapidly evolving area and requires sustained adaptation to stay ahead of emerging threats. Research organizations vary substantially in size, resources, and research portfolios and experience challenges unique to their circumstances. NSF continues to support the community in their efforts through initiatives like the SECURE Program to provide the situational awareness and access to tools and best practices to help build their research security capacity.

- 3. There have been concerns about significant delays in award decisions—are any delays attributable to research security reviews, directorate restructuring, or administrative**

capacity challenges within NSF? How does NSF intend to ensure a healthy pace of grant-making and scientific investment balanced with implementing sufficient research security standards and protocols?

NSF remains committed to supporting meritorious cutting-edge research and fostering the next generation of U.S. STEM talent. A number of factors have impacted the pace of NSF award actions, including the 45-day lapse in appropriations at the start of this Fiscal Year. However, it is important to note that a significant increase in award activity is typically seen in Q4, a trend that can also be observed this Fiscal Year. With respect to research security, NSF is focused on scaling up analytics capabilities and streamlining processes with the intent of improving workflows to reduce workloads while better enabling the Foundation to assess proposals for research security issues at scale.