

Protecting US Biomedical Science Integrity From Undue Foreign Interference: The NIH Experience

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National Science, Technology, and Security Roundtable

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Virtual Meeting

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Disclosures: None



Headlines!

OPINION

University of Florida swiftly addressed foreign research controversy | Column

The university worked with NIH and law enforcement and stemmed the problem quickly, writes the chair of UF's board of trustees.

FOREIGN INFLUENCE

Florida center details fired scientists' links to China

Report finds six cancer researchers didn't disclose Thousand Talents deals

By **Jeffrey Mervis**

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL.

POLITICS | NATIONAL SECURITY

Harvard Chemistry Chairman Charged on Alleged Undisclosed Ties to China

Charles Lieber is accused of lying to Defense Department, National Institutes of Health about Chinese government funding

 **NEWS**

Emory professor hit with criminal charge, linked to Chinese government program

Xiojiang Li was a member of the Thousand Talents plan, a Chinese program that a Senate report last year said was designed to steal sensitive research.

JUSTICE NEWS

Department of Justice

Office of Public Affairs

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Thursday, November 12, 2020

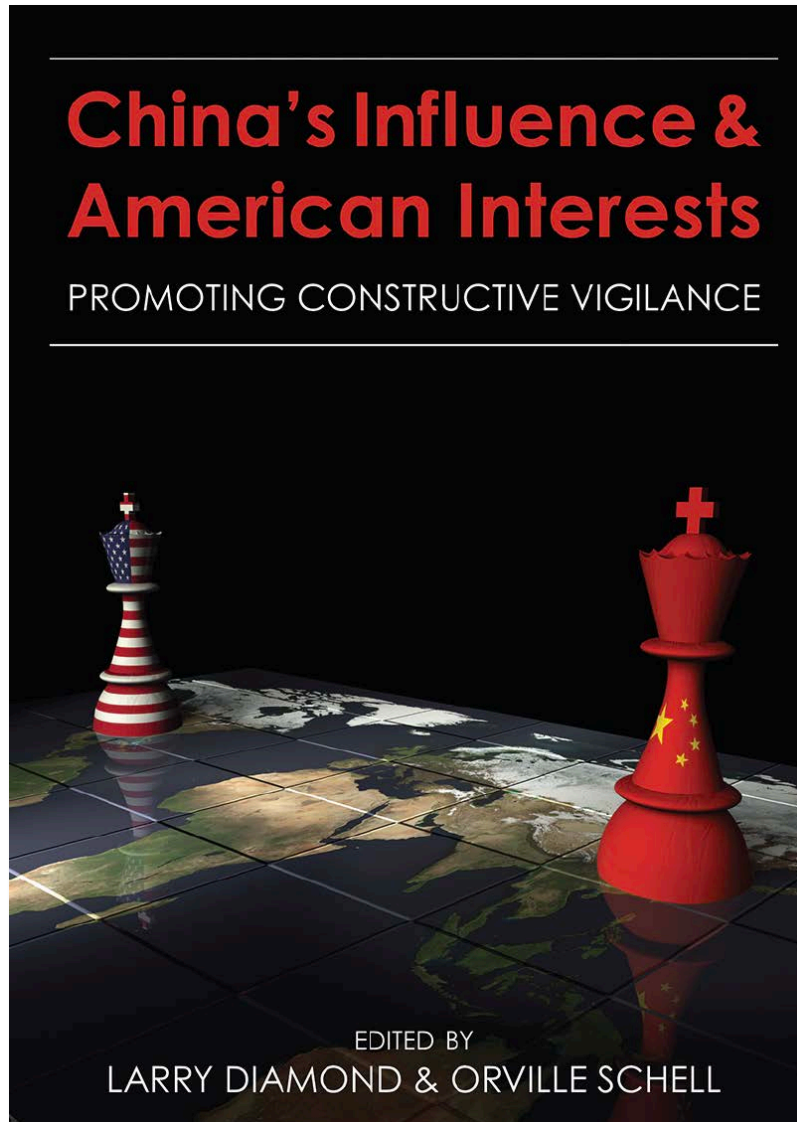
University Researcher Pleads Guilty to Lying on Grant Applications to Develop Scientific Expertise for China

A rheumatology professor and researcher with strong ties to China pleaded guilty to making false statements to federal authorities as part of an immunology research fraud scheme.

Song Guo Zheng, 58, of Hilliard, appeared in federal court today, at which time his guilty plea was accepted by Chief U.S. District Judge Algenon L. Marbley.



- Undisclosed research support
 - Employment, Thousand Talents contracts
 - Grants from foreign agencies, sometimes duplicate/overlapping
- Undisclosed COI
- Peer review violations
 - Sharing applications



“China’s most systematic channel for identifying foreign-based non-traditional collectors is its ... Thousand Talents Program (TTP) ... aims to **recruit** leading overseas scientists ... Official Chinese TTP websites list more than three hundred US government researchers and more than six hundred US corporate personnel who have accepted TTP money. **In many cases, these individuals do not disclose receiving the TTP money to their employer, which for US government employees is illegal and for corporate personnel likely represents a conflict of interest that violates their employee agreement.**”

Hoover Institution Press Publication No. 702
Hoover Institution at Leland Stanford Junior University,
Stanford, California 94305-6003

中共中央组织部

国家“千人计划”入选通知书

中共中央组织部人才工作局
海外高层次人才引进工作专项办公室

The Organization Department of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China

National “Thousand Talents Program” Shortlisting Notification

To [REDACTED]

After the experts’ review and the approval of the Working Group on the Transfer of High-level Foreign Talents, you are officially shortlisted in Batch [REDACTED] of the national “Thousand Talents Program.” According to the related provisions, you would enjoy the corresponding working and living benefits and receive a certain amount of financial support after you have performed the work contract.

Notice is hereby given .

[Stamp: Talent Bureau of the Organization Department of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China]

Talent Bureau of the Organization Department of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China

Chinese Academy of Sciences

Employment Contract of "Recruiting Overseas Professionals"



Employer (Party A):



Employee (Party B):



2014



Article 1 Position and Term of Employment

Party A employs Party B as a professor in "Thousand Talents Program" for a period of five years. The employment period is from [REDACTED] 2019. Party B shall work full time at Party A premise as a professor effective from the commencement date of this contract.

2. Job Objectives during the Employment Period:

A. Scientific Research Objectives:

a. The laboratory in the United States will be gradually moved back to China to rebuild, and the international cutting-edge translational medicine will continue to be carried out.

".... The laboratory in the United States will be gradually moved back to China..."

①Party A shall provide Party C with a basic start-up research fund with a cumulative amount of RMB 8,000,000. The aforementioned basic start-up research fund shall be used within five (5) year, with the fund for hardware construction being used within three (3) years. The start-up fund shall mainly cover the following expenditures for Party C and his team , such as lab construction, equipments purchase, scientific research, academic exchanges, and salary for research assistants (A minimum of



项目实施3年内（即中期考核时）

Within 3 years of project implementation (i.e. during interim review)

专利产出：

；申请国内专利2-3项。

Patent output:

； and 2-3 domestic patents will be applied.



US Institutions Unaware of What Their Faculty are Doing

“Dr X – We were unaware of these additional funding sources until the communication from Dr. Lauer at NIH. ... We have obtained translations of these applications / contracts. Regarding the Thousand Talents Program ... you indicated that this was an honor program, comparable to an academic title. It is clear from the contract that this program includes provision of space, staff, & funds for laboratory research and expected research deliverables...”

Criminal Implications of “the Money”



United States Department of Justice

THE UNITED STATES ATTORNEY'S OFFICE
NORTHERN DISTRICT *of* GEORGIA

[U.S. Attorneys](#) » [Northern District of Georgia](#) » [News](#)

Department of Justice

U.S. Attorney's Office

Northern District of Georgia

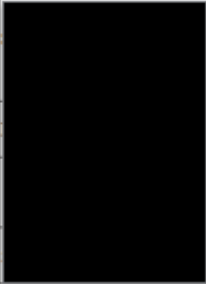
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE


Monday, May 11, 2020

Former Emory University professor and Chinese “Thousand Talents” participant convicted and sentenced for filing a false tax return





项目批准号 Project Approval Number	
申请代码 Application Code	
归口管理部门 Centralized Management Department	
依托单位代码 Supporting Unit Code	



国家自然科学基金委员会

National Natural Science Foundation of
China


资助项目计划书


Sponsored Project Proposal



National Institutes of Health
Office of Extramural Research
National Institutes of Health
Office of Extramural Research




项目批准号	
申请代码	
归口管理部门	
依托单位代码	




国家自然科学基金委员会
资助项目计划书

资助类别:
亚类说明:
附注说明:
项目名称:
直接费用:
项目资金:
负责人:
通讯地址:
邮政编码:
电子邮件:
依托单位:
联系人:
填表日期:



.edu.cn



American scientist as team lead

Annual person-months



国家自然科学基金项目计划书

项目组主要成员

编号	姓名	出生年月	性别	职称	学位	单位名称	电话	证件号码	项目分工	每年工作时间(月)
1										10
2										10
3										10



US Grant

- Aim 1: AAAAAA
- Aim 2: BBBBBB
- Aim 3: CCCCCC

Foreign Grant

- Aim 1: AAAAAA
- Aim 2: BBBBBB
- Aim 3: CCCCCC

- NIH is funding grants identical or highly similar to Chinese grants
- Investigators are “double-dipping” – and not disclosing



Department of Justice

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
THURSDAY, DECEMBER 19, 2019
WWW.JUSTICE.GOV

Office of Public Affairs
(202) 514-2007
TTY (866) 544-5309

DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE REACHES \$5.5 MILLION SETTLEMENT WITH VAN ANDEL RESEARCH INSTITUTE TO RESOLVE ALLEGATIONS OF UNDISCLOSED CHINESE GRANTS TO TWO RESEARCHERS

WASHINGTON — The Department of Justice announced today that Van Andel Research Institute (VARI) has agreed to pay \$5,500,000.00 to resolve allegations that it violated the False Claims Act by submitting federal grant applications and progress reports to the National Institutes

Undisclosed \$11.7 Million China-Based Business

广州康睿生物医药科技股份有限公司

GuangZhou KangRui Biological Pharmaceutical
Technology Co.,Ltd.



<https://inewsource.org/2019/07/06/thousand-talents-program-china-fbi-kang-zhang-ucsd/>



LETTER

doi:10.1038/nature14650

Lanosterol reverses protein aggregation in cataracts

Ling Zhao^{1,2,3,*}†, Xiang-Jun Chen^{4*}, Jie Zhu^{3,5*}, Yi-Bo Xi^{4*}, Xu Yang^{6*}, Li-Dan Hu^{4*}, Hong Ouyang^{2,3}, Sherrina H. Patel³, Xin Jin⁶, Danni Lin³, Frances Wu³, Ken Flagg³, Huimin Cai^{1,7}, Gen Li¹, Guiqun Cao¹, Ying Lin^{2,3}, Daniel Chen³, Cindy Wen³, Christopher Chung³, Yandong Wang², Austin Qiu^{3,8}, Emily Yeh³, Wenqiu Wang^{3,9}, Xun Hu¹, Seanna Grob³, Ruben Abagyan¹⁰, Zhiguang Su¹, Harry Christiano Tjondro⁴, Xi-Juan Zhao⁴, Hongrong Luo³, Rui Hou⁷, J. Jefferson P. Perry¹¹, Weiwei Gao^{3,12}, Igor Kozak¹³, David Granet³, Yingrui Li⁶, Xiaodong Sun⁹, Jun Wang⁶, Liangfang Zhang^{3,12}, Yizhi Liu², Yong-Bin Yan⁴ & Kang Zhang^{1,2,3,12,14,15}

Rui Hou⁷Kang Zhang^{1,2,3,12,14,15}

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Case 3: “Keep this confidential.”

This MD Anderson researcher was alleged to have “emailed an NIH grant application to a scientist based in the People’s Republic of China.”

According to Weber’s report, the researcher “also may have sent at least two NIH grant applications to U.S.-based scientists who were not designated by the NIH to review the material.”

In one instance, the researcher instructed the recipient of the information to “keep it to yourself.”

In another instance, the accompanying note read, “Here is bone and meat [sic] you need.”

On yet another occasion, the researcher sent an NIH grant application to a department within the National Cancer Center/Cancer Hospital Chinese academy of Medical Science. The transmittal email read: “Some methods you may learn from this proposal. Keep this confidential.”

The researcher received all of these applications from NIH legitimately, for the purposes of conducting peer review.

Cancer Letter, April 26, 2019



- At least 200 scientists, not all ethnically Chinese
- 92 institutions, many fields of biomedicine, all over US
- Nearly all in pre-clinical research
- Denials despite documents to the contrary; explanations
 - “I allowed XXX to use my name as PI”
 - “I knew nothing about this grant...”
 - “I didn’t actually do the work...”
 - “The affiliations [in published papers] were in error ...”

Key Point: Encourage but be Transparent

- “While most international collaborations are acceptable **and encouraged**, we urge researchers to err on the side of **transparency**.”
- “It protects everyone’s interests – the Federal government, Penn State, individual researchers, and their international collaborators – to have international relationships **disclosed and vetted** to determine if there are any potential conflict of commitments, duplications of research, and/or diversion of intellectual property in the performance of federally funded research.”

Incomplete Thank You

- NIH
 - Larry Tabak, Carrie Wolinetz, Jodi Black, Patricia Valdez, Sally Amero, Michelle Bulls, Julie Muroff, Kate Tapley, Mike Shannon, Bill Cullen, Liza Bundesen, Megan Columbus, Renate Myles, Katrina Pearson, Rick Ikeda, Jess Mazerik, Nicole Garbarini, Minna Liang, Francesca Bosetti, Tara Schwetz, others
- FBI, DOJ, DNI
 - John Brown, Don Lichay, Tam Dao, Melody Hounsell, Jeff Stoff, John Napier, Jason Vanthomme, John Hartnett, Tim Clifton, Melissa Abbate, others
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- DHHS
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- State
 - Jonathan Margolis, Andrew Hebbeler, Megan Frisk, Staci Rijal, Riju Srimal, others
- OSTP and other research agencies
 - Rebecca Keiser, Jeremy Ison, Bindu Nair, Helena Fu, Aaron Miles, others
- Dozens of VPRs and institutional compliance / integrity leaders

