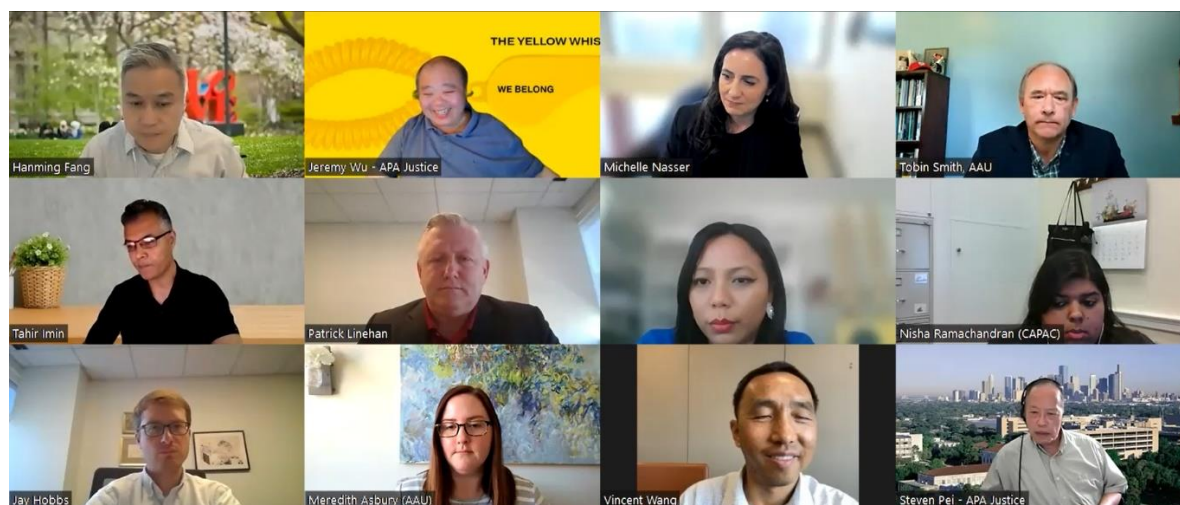


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2022/06/06 APA Justice Monthly Meeting Complete Summary Posted



During the June 6, 2022, APA Justice monthly meeting, **Tobin Smith**, Vice President for Science Policy & Global Affairs, Association of American Universities (AAU) gave a comprehensive report on the AAU activities. We thank Toby for his remarks which have now been included and posted at <https://bit.ly/3zFnCT3>.

Founded in 1900, AAU represents the Presidents and Chancellors of 63 leading research universities in the United States and 2 in Canada. Toby reported on AAU's involvement with issues related to research security starting with the Cold War, resulting in the [National Security Decision Directive 189](#) (NSDD-189) which was issued under the Reagan Administration.

Toby commented that his second full-time job started in February 2018 when FBI Director **Christopher Wray** responded to a question in the Senate Intelligence Committee that China uses scientists and students as "non-traditional collectors" of information. This issue just took off. Soon there was a hearing called [Scholars and Spies](#) in the House and it has been going on ever since, including the "China Initiative."

Concerns about this in Congress are significant. AAU's concerns and battles on problematic

policy and related issues including, but not limited to, the Confucius Institutes, the Thousand Talent program, advancement of scientific research, openness, international talent, the USICA and the COMPETES Act, its interaction with the FBI and the intelligence community, uncertainties after the nominal end of the "China Initiative," creation of the National Security Presidential Memorandum 33, immigration, and international science collaboration.

Toby highlighted one new requirement in the Senate's USICA for faculty to report any gift or contract they receive from a foreign country at a \$0 threshold and to maintain the records on a searchable database. It could be a coffee mug. It could be a lunch. (Read more in the next section)

In closing, Toby and AAU recognize that immigrants have made and continue to make contributions to our nation. There are recent reports that a majority of artificial intelligence companies are started not by native-born U.S. citizens but by immigrants. A large percentage of those who work in our defense and industrial base are foreign-born.

There is a reason why China has created talent recruitment programs, the very ones that Congress and our intelligence community are so concerned about. It is because the US for a long time has had the best talent recruitment program of the world. It is partially the US values. It has not always been helped by our immigration policies. We have the top universities in the world. You can come here, work with top scientists, and many who have come here agree and buy into our values. They want to stay. They do stay. And they contribute to the US economy.

Toby will continue to fight for all these issues at AAU. **Meredith Asbury** was also present in the meeting on behalf of AAU.

Read the complete June 6 monthly meeting summary: <https://bit.ly/3zFnCT3> and more APA Justice monthly meeting summaries: <https://bit.ly/3kxkqXP>

Senate Innovation Bill Targeting Foreign Gifts to Faculty



On June 23, 2022, *Science* published "U.S. universities fight Senate innovation bill targeting foreign gifts to faculty." According to the report, that birthday present from your uncle in France must be reported to the office of sponsored research. And, by the way, the details may become public.

Senior research administrators at nearly 500 U.S. colleges and universities could find themselves writing such memos if Congress retains a requirement for reporting individual gifts from foreign sources that is included in a Senate version of a massive innovation bill now being negotiated by lawmakers. But higher education lobbyists, alarmed at the administrative burden and the chilling effect the provision might have on all international collaborations, are waging a last-minute fight to prevent that from happening.

The Senate provision, which has gone almost unnoticed, would require universities to collect information on "any gifts received from a foreign source [by] faculty, professional staff, and others engaged in research." The information would go into a "searchable database" the institution must create and maintain; institutions that violate the rules would be subject to fines of up to \$50,000. The provision applies to any U.S. institution receiving more than \$5 million a year in federal research funding.

But a coalition of leading research universities is trying to get that language removed or significantly amended. "It is duplicative, unworkable ... and counterproductive to both our national research enterprise and to national security," **Barbara Snyder**, president of the 65-member Association of American Universities (AAU), wrote in a [June 15 letter](#) to key members

of the conference committee negotiating the final bill.

The Senate provision also casts too broad a net, according to the AAU letter. “It’s not clear what they are asking for,” says **Marcia Smith**, associate vice chancellor for research administration at the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA).

The U.S. government already requires anyone applying for a federal grant to report all foreign and domestic sources of research support, AAU notes. And the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy has spent the past 3 years developing policies to standardize that reporting across all agencies. In addition, the Department of Education already requires institutions to report any foreign gifts of at least \$250,000, a threshold the Senate language would lower to \$50,000 in another section of its bill.

University administrators see the Senate language as an unfunded mandate—more work without additional resources. They also worry its enactment could push U.S. academic researchers to abandon all international collaborations to avoid running afoul of the new requirements.

That would be a high price to pay, warns **Peter Michelson**, a physicist and senior administrator at Stanford University. “The last thing we should be doing is discouraging those interactions,” he says.

Read more about the Science report: <https://bit.ly/3a2rPWy>. Read more about the AAU letter to Congress: <https://bit.ly/3NsFPXh>

U.S. Labs Face Severe Postdoc Shortage

On June 24, 2022, *Science* published "[U.S. labs face severe postdoc shortage](#)," which is retitled from [an online report](#) that originally appeared on June 13, 2022. According to the report, when **Jennifer Mason** posted an ad for a postdoc position in early March, she was eager to have someone on board by April or May to tackle recently funded projects. Instead, it took 2 months to receive a single application. Since then, only two more have come in. “Money is just sitting there that isn’t being used ... and there’s these projects that aren’t moving anywhere as a result,” says Mason, an assistant professor in genetics at Clemson University.

She isn’t alone. On social media, many U.S. academics have been pointing to widespread challenges in recruiting postdocs. An investigation by *Science Careers* bears this out: More than 100 U.S.-based researchers were contacted because they advertised for postdoc positions this year on scientific society job boards, and of the 37 who responded with information about their hiring experiences, three-quarters reported challenges recruiting. “This year is hard for me to wrestle with: ... we received absolutely zero response from our posting,” one wrote. “The number of applications is 10 times less than 2018-2019,” another wrote.

Those experiencing challenges span STEM fields, including biomedicine, chemistry, environmental science, anthropology, physics, and computer science. Many reported not only a

drop in the total number of applications but also in the quality of applications.

“For the first time I feel my type of job is less rewarding, more frustrating,” says **Donna Zhang**, a professor of pharmacology and toxicology at the University of Arizona who is trying to hire multiple postdocs. “To find qualified people, it’s way more difficult than it used to [be]. ... It’s very bad.”

“There are jobs everywhere,” says **Donna Ginther**, a professor of economics at the University of Kansas, Lawrence, who studies the scientific workforce. Postdocs in general aren’t paid well, she points out, and amid the current labor shortage, higher paid jobs outside of academia have become more available.

Many faculty members expressed sympathy for the situation academic postdocs are in and acknowledged they should be paid more. But they also said that in many cases they feel their hands are tied. Postdoc salaries are frequently based on what the U.S. National Institutes of Health sets as its standard, “and that’s pretty low,” says **Daniel Wolf Savin**, a physicist and senior research scientist at Columbia University who is currently struggling to fill five postdoc positions. When hiring, he competes with national labs that offer up to \$20,000 more per year in salary.

Some of the faculty members *Science Careers* reached out to reported they were looking into other avenues for getting their work done, including offering permanent staff researcher positions. But others say grant budget constraints make such positions unrealistic for them.

Read more: <https://bit.ly/3QT5j31> or <https://bit.ly/3a2toUq>

Reminder from Twitter on "China Initiative"

"China Initiative = **Racism**"

"China Initiative" **didn't** end

"Protect Don't Penalize Faculty for Doing Our Job"

"Innocent Until Proven Guilty"



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