


UM-ACP July 2021 Survey

University of Michigan
Association of Chinese Professors

Questions: Ann Lin (annlin@umich.edu), Duxin Sun (duxins@med.umich.edu)


Rationale for the UM-ACP Survey

- Learning from the news (2018-2019)
 - DOJ China initiative, NIH 10,000 letters, FBI warning brochure to Academia
- Shock and confusion (High profile arrests, 2020)
- Something was not right (Jan-July, 2021)
 - Discrepancy between news release vs. court documents, dropped cases, acquitted cases
 - Government is not being truthful, misleading, exaggerating, power-abusing
- Data gathering and fact finding (Survey, May-July, 2021)
- Communicating with leaderships (July- Nov 2021)
 - Letter to UM leadership (July, 2021)
 - Letter to Biden (Oct. 2021)
 - Letter to Eric lander of OSTP, White House (Nov. 2021)



Andrew E. Lelling
Partner, Investigations & White Collar, Jones Day
3d · Edited

When we created DOJ's China Initiative in 2018, we were responding to long-term concerns about economic espionage involving an emerging geopolitical rival. This was sound policy, but the Initiative has drifted and, in some significant ways, lost its focus. DOJ should revamp, and shut down, parts of the program, to avoid needlessly chilling scientific and business collaborations with Chinese partners. MIT Technology Review did a great job breaking down the Initiative's record, three years in. [#china](#) [#whitecollarcrime](#) [#researchintegrity](#)



The US crackdown on Chinese economic espionage is a mess. We have the data to...
technologyreview.com

Dec 2, 2021

Survey background



Associate Professor, Public Policy/Political Science, Gerald R. Ford School of Public Policy
Director, Lieberthal-Rogel Center for Chinese Studies

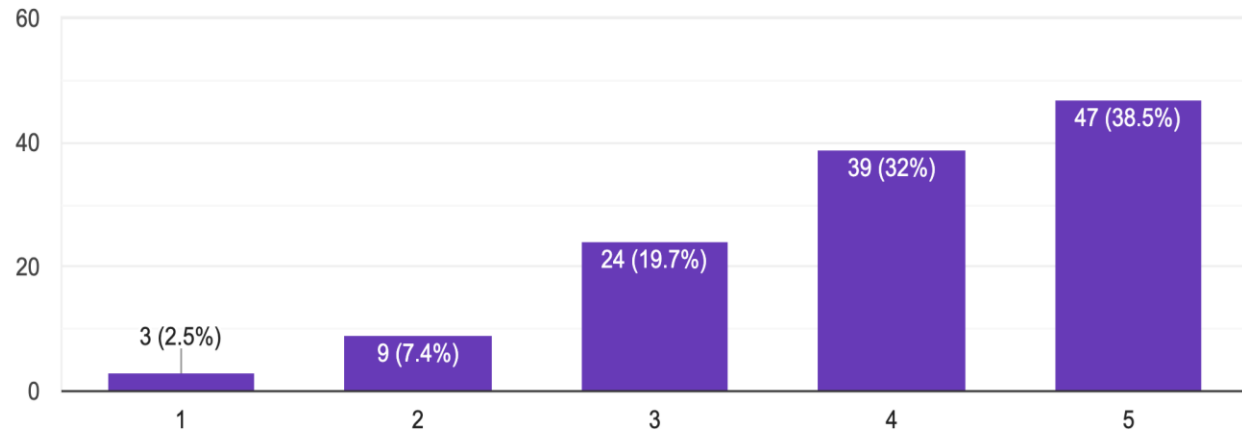
- Survey was conducted via Google Forms, July 12-23, 2021
- Invitations were sent to 369 members on the UM-ACP email list
 - Most are US citizens and permanent residents
 - ~50% from Mainland China
 - ~50% from Taiwan, Hongkong, Singapore, Malaysia, ABC, or any other countries
- 123 responses were received, for a 33% response rate
- Respondents came from all academic disciplines in all schools and three campuses (Ann Arbor, Dearborn, Flint) and all ranks (61% tenured)

Ten Major Findings

#1: 71% agree that Asian American faculty, staff, and student concerns are largely invisible to UM leadership

a. The concerns of Asian American faculty, staff, and students have been largely invisible to UM leadership.

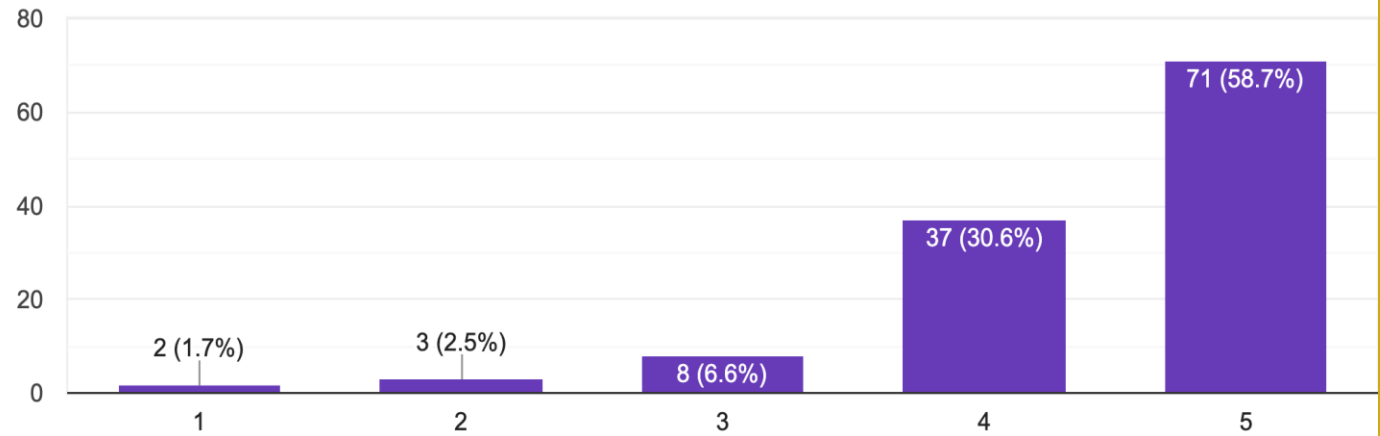
122 responses



1. Strongly Disagree ----- 5. Strongly Agree

#2: 89% agree that UM leadership positions lack Asian American representation

b. UM leadership positions and/or key committees lack representation of Asian American faculty.
121 responses

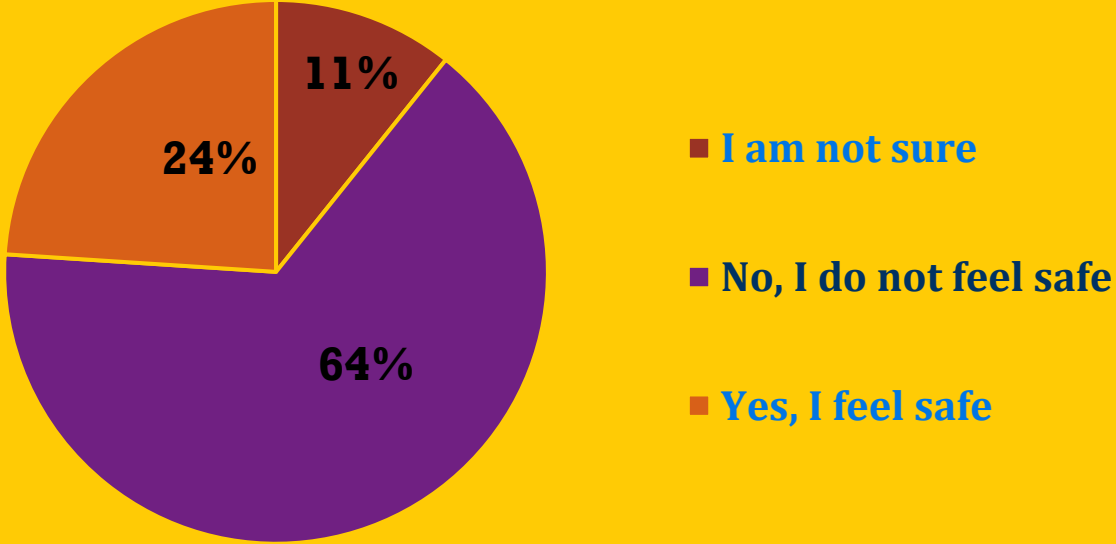


1. Strongly Disagree



5. Strongly Agree

#3: 64% do not feel safe as Chinese-origin academic researchers in the U.S



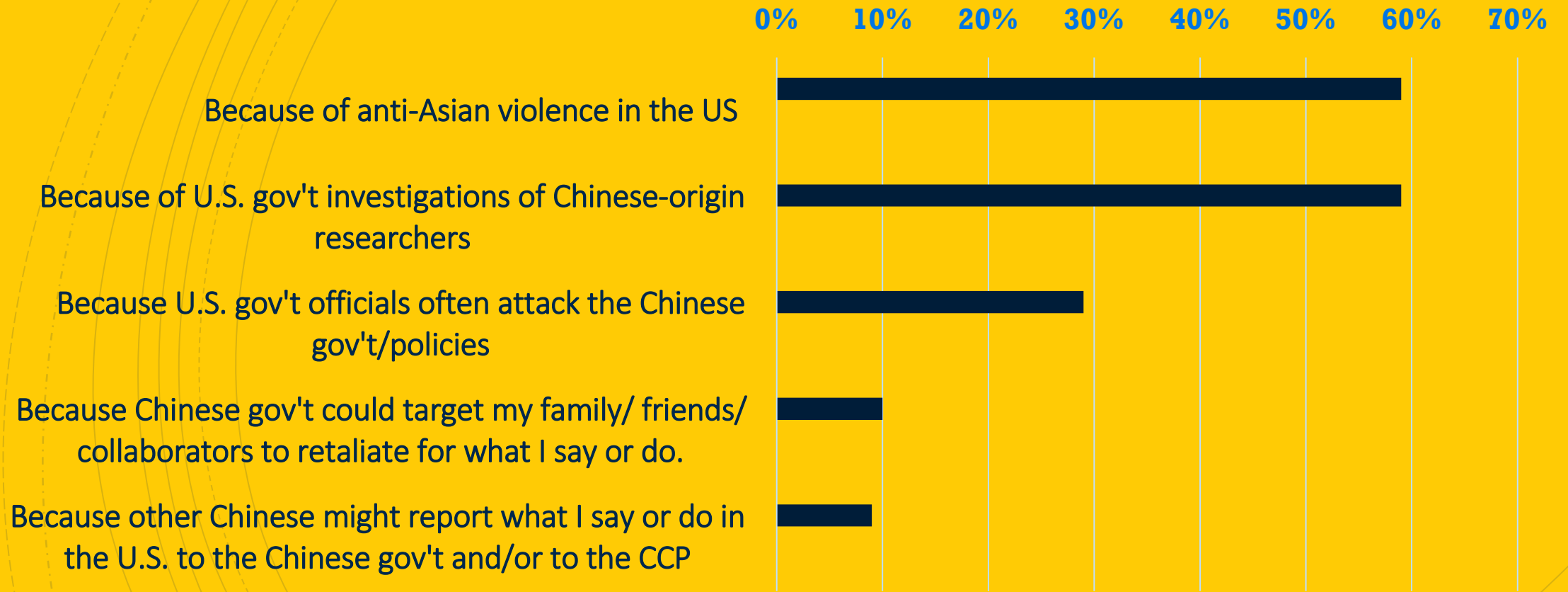
Eleven percent are not sure:

“While the current situation is not too bad, I am concerned about the deteriorated situation in the future.”

“Honestly I have mixed feelings.”

“Overall, I have confidence in the American system but have some concerns.”

“I do not feel safe . . .”



A White male approached my family member at Michigan Union and spit on them without any reason. This leaves my family member not knowing how to respond. This was never reported to any authority.

During Zoom classes, my kids heard anti-Asian and anti-Chinese comments from the students, yet the teachers took no actions.

I have been demoralized by my department's lack of interest and support regarding the anti-Asian climate and Atlanta shootings.

I believe that the immigrant desire "not to make waves" allows university leadership to take advantage of the work that Asian Americans do on campus and in the community.

**Anti-Asian
actions and Asian
invisibility**

Federal law enforcement, federal agency, and UM investigations

22 researchers questioned by UM, federal law enforcement, or federal agencies

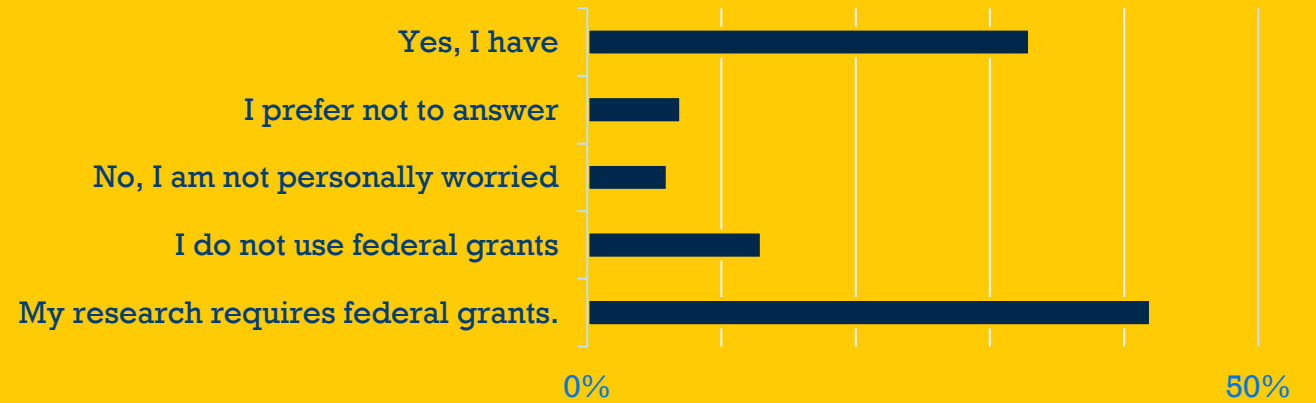
- **15 were questioned by UM administrators (dept chair/dean, OVPR, etc)**
- **9 were questioned by federal law enforcement**
- **5 were questioned by grant agencies**

#4: 80% of those investigated were not informed of their rights or responsibilities by UM

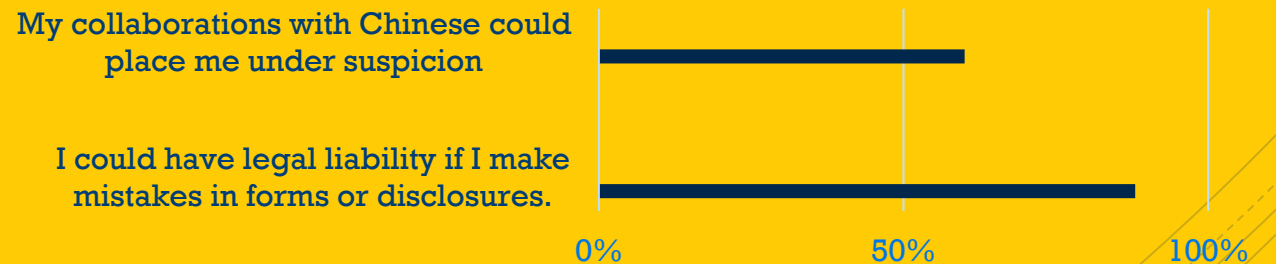
- **80%** say that **UM** did not inform them about rights and responsibilities
- **67%** say that **federal law enforcement** did not inform them about rights and responsibilities
- **30%** say that **federal agencies** did not inform them about rights and responsibilities

#5: 33% have considered avoiding federal grant applications

Have you considered avoiding federal grants?



I have considered avoiding federal grant applications because I am afraid that ...



**100% of
researchers know
WHERE they
should disclose.**

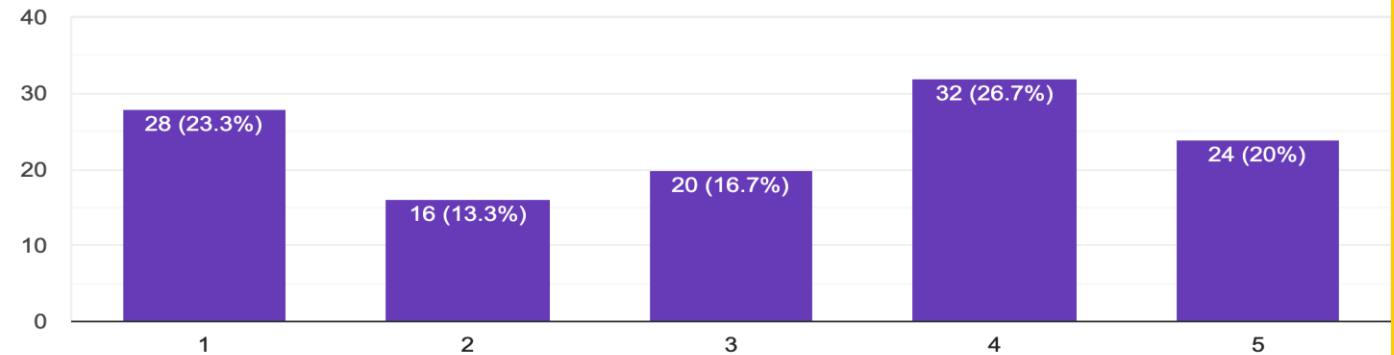
**60% are not sure
WHAT.**

- “The policies have been changing in the past several years. One would think they are clear at one time but then the policies change. It's almost a moving target.”
- “The new requirement for disclosure is so vague and different universities or different people can interpret in different way. People are just scared. . . . The vague criteria for disclosure is just set up a trap to get someone in violation”

#6: 47% find it difficult to concentrate or be as productive as before

n. Due to the ethnic profiling of Chinese researchers, I am finding it difficult to concentrate on my academic work and/or to be as productive as before.

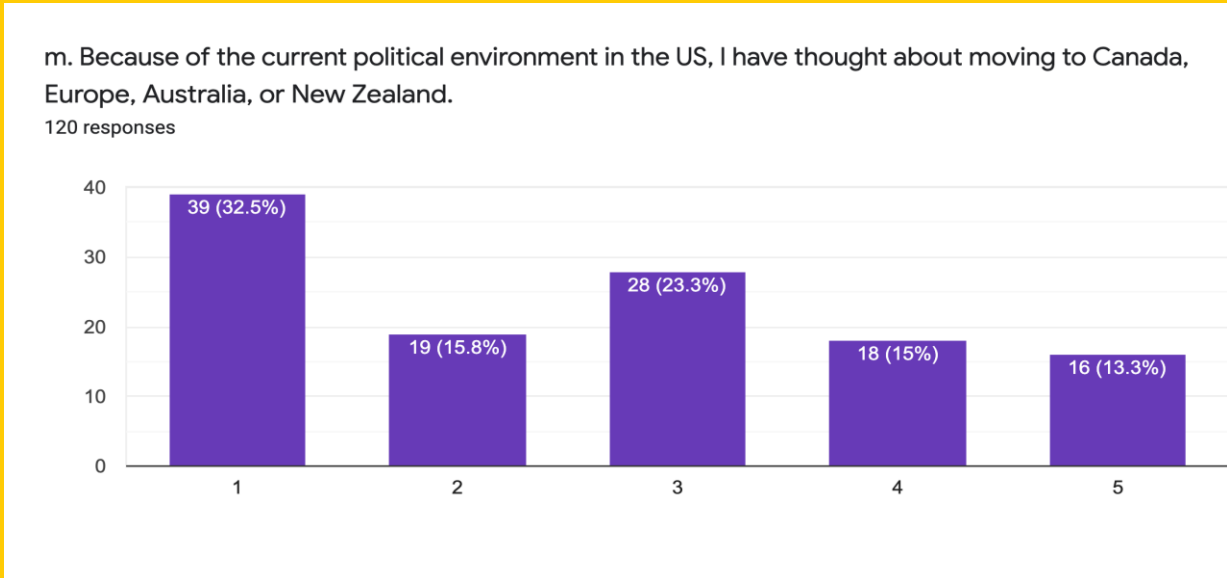
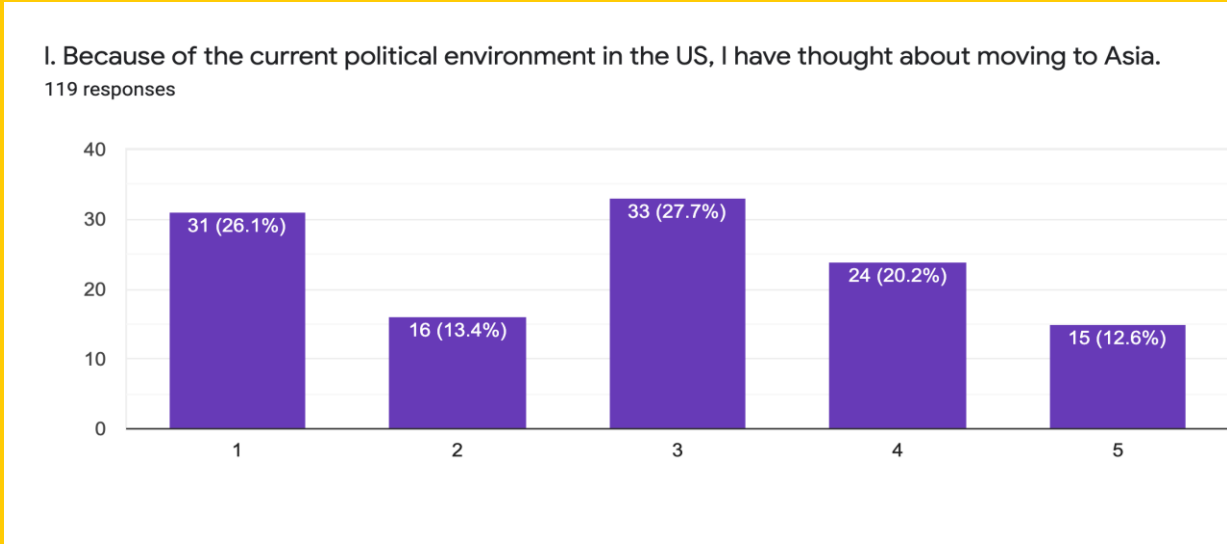
120 responses



1. Strongly Disagree

5. Strongly Agree

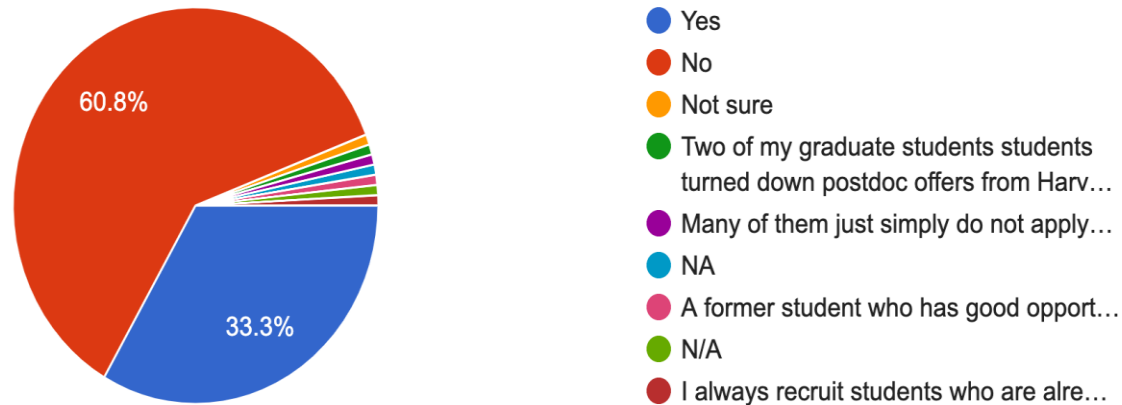
#7: 42% have thought about leaving the U.S. for another country



1. Strongly Disagree ----- 5. Strongly Agree

9. Do you have students or postdocs who have turned down offers from U.S. institutions because they feel the U.S. is not a welcoming environment for people like them?

120 responses

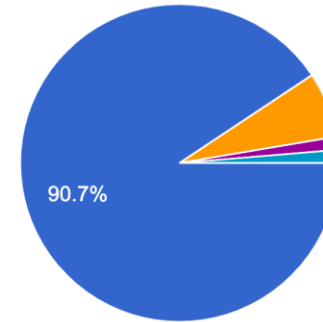


33% have students/postdocs who have turned down offers from U.S. institutions.

#8: 91% of faculty with collaborations in China believe UM encouraged these before 2018. Only 12% do now.

Before 2018, did you feel that UM encouraged collaborations in China?

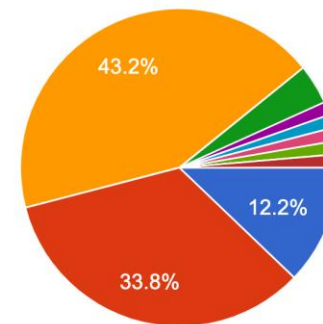
75 responses



- Yes, before 2018, UM encouraged collaborations in China.
- No, before 2018, UM did not encourage collaborations in China.
- Before 2018, UM neither encouraged nor discouraged collaborations in China.
- I prefer not to answer
- not sure, I joined in 2019
- not in UM before 2018

Do you feel that UM currently encourages collaborations in China?

74 responses

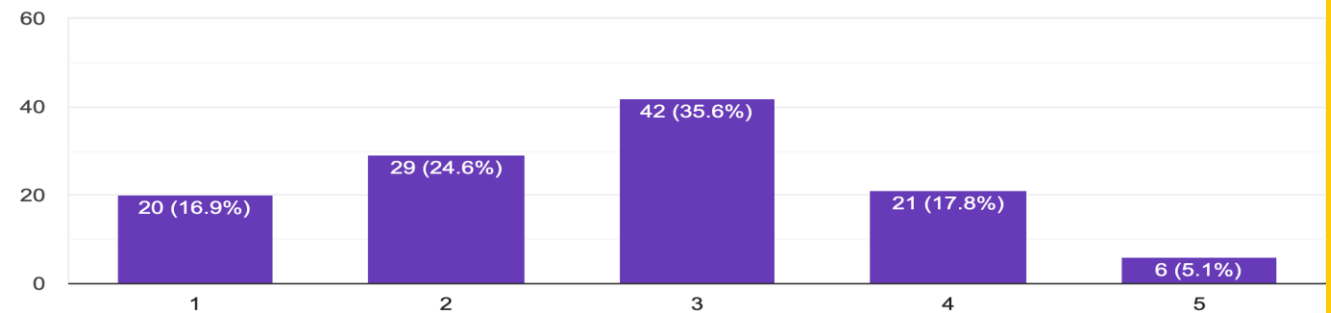


- Yes, UM encourages collaborations in China.
- No, UM does not encourage collabora...
- UM neither encourages nor discourag...
- I prefer not to answer.
- I am not sure.
- Often now UM appears to discourag...
- I really don't know. The messages are...
- Not sure what UM's position is right no...
- I am not sure. I feel there is no strong...

#9. 42 percent fear UM will not support Asian American faculty, staff, or students if targeted by the U.S. government.

g. I believe that the UM administration will support Asian and Asian American faculty, staff, or students if they are targeted by the U.S. government.

118 responses

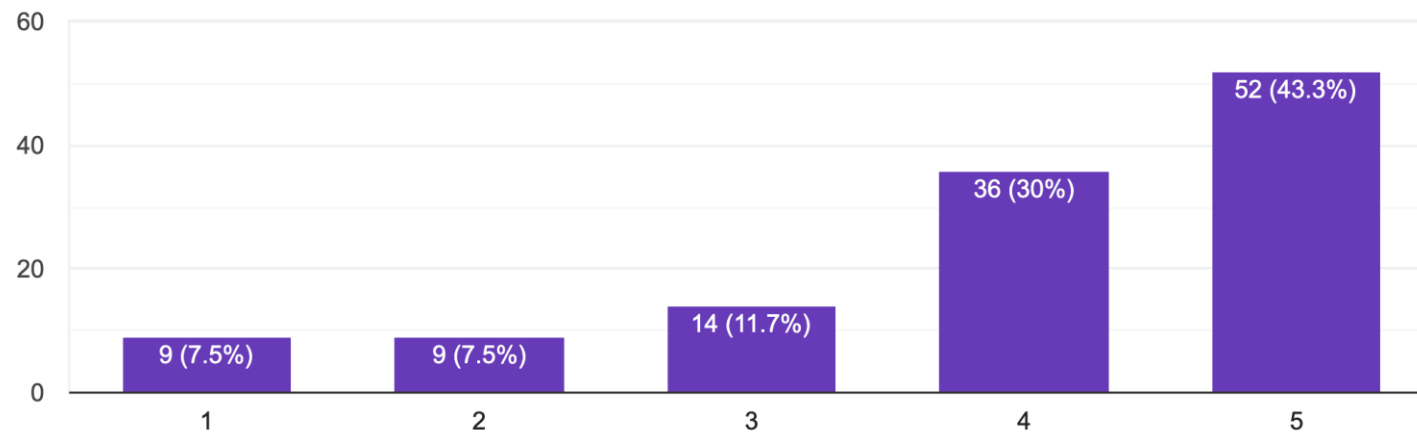


1. Strongly Disagree

5. Strongly Agree

o. Because of tensions between the U.S. and China, I am worried about traveling to China and/or bringing UM students with me to China (after the pandemic is over).

120 responses



1. Strongly Disagree

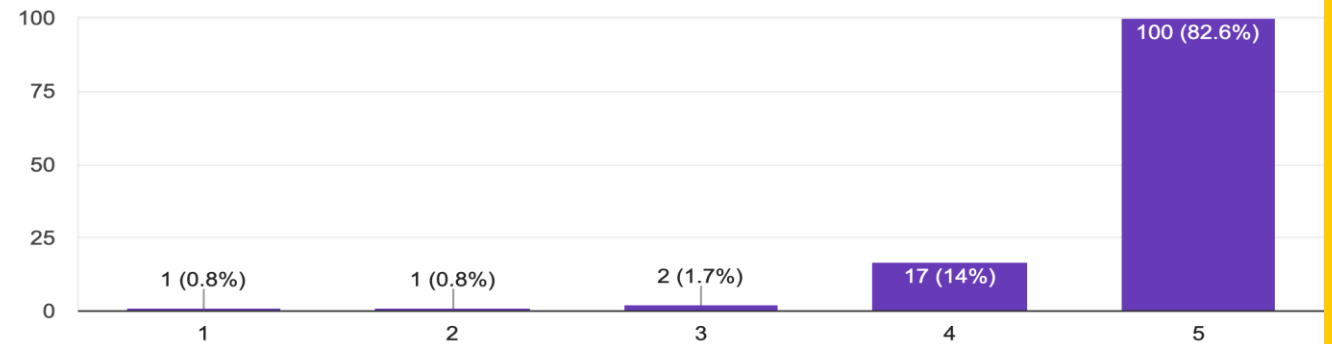
5. Strongly Agree

72% are worried about traveling to and/or bringing students to China (post-pandemic).

#10: 95% want UM to collectively and publicly raise concerns about ethnic profiling.

p. UM needs to work with other universities to collectively and publicly raise concerns about ethnic profiling of Chinese-origin researchers by federal agencies.

121 responses



1. Strongly Disagree

5. Strongly Agree

Communicating with Leaderships

- **Letter to University leadership**
 - Presentation of survey data (Sep 2021)
 - Discussion of six action items (tentative Dec 17, 2021)
- **Letter to President Biden**
 - Raise concerns of China initiative, ethnic profiling, anti-Asian hate, Academic freedom, academic brain drain
 - Five request items
- **Letter to Eric Lander of OSTP**
 - Comments on NIH disclosure guidance: What and when were guidance changed? What are the confusion?
 - Seven suggestions for consistent, transparent, balanced guidance

UM-ACP Letter to UM Leadership



The University of Michigan
Association of Chinese Professors
(UM-ACP) www.umacp.org

To: President Schlissel, Provost Collins, General Counsel Lynch, Vice President Cunningham, and Vice Provost Sellers
From: University of Michigan Association of Chinese Professors (UM-ACP)
Date: 7/28/2021
Re: Requesting a meeting to discuss anti-Asian hate and ethnic profiling

Dear President Schlissel, Provost Collins, General Counsel Lynch, Vice President Cunningham, and Vice Provost Sellers,

On behalf of University of Michigan Association of Chinese Professors (UM-ACP), representing about 400 faculty from three campuses and 19 schools at UM, we would like to express our gratitude to you and the entire UM leadership team for supporting international collaborations, and for welcoming a diverse Asian and Asian American community on campus.

We write today to draw your attention to the rapid deterioration of the research environment for those international collaborations, and for our community. Our July 2021 survey of ACP members received over 120 responses and finds:

Six Discussion Items with University Leadership

1. Increase clarity and consistency in conflict of interest and conflict of commitment policy; provide legal guidance in the grant application process to avoid pitfalls in an ever-evolving legal environment; and create a checklist of disclosures for funding agencies and internal reporting.
2. Provide training to administrators who work with faculty on grant applications and international collaboration, so that they are aware of the sensitivities and legal scope of the DOJ's China Initiative and similar federal investigations, and can assist faculty and students in fulfilling their responsibilities and protecting their rights.
3. Set up an office, separate from the usual functions of the general counsel, to ensure that faculty and students are advised of legal rights during any inquiries, and receive initial legal consulting until specialized counsel can be retained.
4. Strategize with the UM Division of Public Safety and Security, Student Life, other UM administrative units, and local governments in the Ann Arbor area to prevent anti-Asian hate incidents and to address them in a coordinated way if they occur.
5. Ensure sufficient representation of Asian American faculty in leadership and key committee positions in the university so that our knowledge and our voices are part of the university's deliberations and decision making.
6. Communicate with our congressional representatives, other AAU member universities, relevant government agencies and the public regarding the ethnic profiling of Chinese and other Asian American scientists.

Letter to President Biden

1. Raise concerns of China initiative, ethnic profiling, anti-Asian hate, Academic freedom, academic brain drain

2. Five request items

3. From ACPs of 14 Universities including UM-ACP

October 25, 2021

The Honorable Joseph R. Biden
President of the United States
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Ave, NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Biden:

Despite the many challenges we still face, our nation is now on a path of healing from the wound of the pandemic, from political and racial divides, from a rise in anti-Asian hate and violence, and from the 20-year conflict in Afghanistan. We the undersigned, as a coalition of nearly 2000 Asian American and Asian immigrant academicians and scientists at 14 universities, thank you for your establishment of the White House Initiative on Asian Americans, Native Hawaiians, and Pacific Islanders (WHIAANHP), and for your signing of the COVID-19 Hate Crimes Act to protect the Asian American community. These are historic milestones in steps towards addressing the racial injustices and ethnic discrimination our community has suffered at a systemic level, from the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882, to the gross injustice to the Japanese Americans incarcerated in federal detention centers during WWII, to the surveillance and profiling of Arab, Middle Eastern, Muslim and South Asian (AMEMSA) communities post 9/11.

Here, we reach out to you to express our grave concern about the Department of Justice's (DOJ) "China Initiative," which was launched during former President Trump's administration purportedly to combat economic espionage and intellectual property theft. However, the initiative adheres to the problematic theory of "non-traditional intelligence collectors" on U.S. soil, especially on university campuses. Studies¹ found that this theory often subjects persons of Asian descent to misguided scrutiny and unsupported suspicion of spying, conflicting with the 4th and the 14th Amendment to the US Constitution on human rights and equal protection. And it has led to a sharp increase in the number of prosecutions against US scholars and scientists at a time of intensified international competition in science and technology.

November 10, 2021

Dr. Eric Lander
Director, Office of Science and Technology Policy, White House
Email: researchsecurity@ostp.eop.gov

Re: Input on NSPM-33 implementation, Clear Rules for Research Security and Researcher Responsibility

Dear Dr. Lander,

Thank you for your post on August 10, 2021 regarding the Clear Rules for Research Security and Researcher Responsibility.
<https://www.whitehouse.gov/ostp/news-updates/2021/08/10/clear-rules-for-research-security-and-researcher-responsibility/>

As you indicated, the current roles and policies regarding the disclosures forms from various federal agencies are unclear and confusing. In fact, some of the policies conflict with others at the same agency, or across multiple agencies. Some of the policies can also be interpreted in different ways from agency to agency, from university to university, from college to college, from department to department, from faculty to faculty.

We appreciate the request to provide input from the scientific community on this very important topic. We especially thank you for this effort because this type of opportunity was not provided by most federal agencies when their guidance on disclosure was formulated.

The attached spreadsheet was crowdsourced by scientists from over 50 universities who have been affected by the NIH disclosure guidance. We have grouped these comments by guidance document, so that you can see how NIH guidance has evolved to become increasingly vague and in some places, self-contradictory. We conclude:

Letter to Eric Lander of OSTP

1. Comments on NIH disclosure guidance:
What and when were guidance changed?
What are the confusion?

2. Seven suggestions for consistent,
transparent, balanced guidance



Associate Professor, Public Policy/Political Science, Gerald R. Ford School of Public Policy
Director, Lieberthal-Rogel Center for Chinese Studies