Impact of Federal Policy on Academic Research and Academic Brain Drain

July-August 2021 Ethnic Profiling Survey

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University of Michigan Association of Chinese Professors (UM-ACP)

Columbia University Asian Faculty Association

Faculty and Staff of Chinese Heritage Association of Notre Dame

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Michigan State University Chinese Faculty Club
Iowa State University Chinese Faculty and Staff Association
Survey background

- Invitations were sent to 927 members of Asian/Chinese faculty associations at five universities: University of Michigan, Michigan State, Iowa State, Columbia, and Notre Dame
- No public criminal or civil charges of disclosure violations, fraud, theft, or espionage at any of these universities
- Survey was conducted via Google Forms, July-August 2021
- 295 full responses were received, for a 32% response rate
- Respondents came from all academic disciplines
- Students and postdoctoral fellows are not included

Survey PI/Co-PI: Detroit Arab American Survey (2003); Reducing Prejudice against Arab Americans (2020); Of People and Pandemics: Survey of International Coping and Compliance (2020)
We need a secure, open, and supportive environment for science.

- Academic researchers are frightened.
- Their fears are grounded in federal policy, and in the university response.
- "Brain drain" is a serious potential consequence.
We need a secure, open, and supportive environment for science. Academic researchers are frightened.
71% of Chinese American researchers do not feel safe, or are uncertain about their safety in the future.

- **59% do not feel safe; 12% 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 . . .”

Because other Chinese might report what I say or do in the U.S. to Chinese government: 24 (8%)
Because Chinese government could target my family/friends/collaborators to retaliate: 32 (10.7%)
Because U.S. government officials often attack the Chinese government or Chinese policies: 88 (29.4%)
Because of the U.S. government’s investigations into Chinese-origin researchers: 168 (56.2%)
Because of anti-Asian violence in the U.S.: 167 (55.9%)
12% expressed fear of China. All were also fearful of the U.S. government.*

- 11% of respondents feared that “my family, friends, or collaborators in China might be targeted by the Chinese government in retaliation for something I say or do.”
- 6.4% of respondents feared that “other Chinese might report what I say or do in the U.S. to the Chinese government or the CCP. Nearly all were also afraid of retaliation (see above).
- Every person who expressed fear of the Chinese government also felt unsafe because of the “U.S. government’s investigations of Chinese-origin researchers” and/or “because U.S. government officials often attack the Chinese government or Chinese policies.”

* This slide was not part of the 02.25.2022 presentation but was added in response to questions.
41% find it difficult to concentrate or be as productive as before
A White male approached my family member at Campus and spit on them without any reason. This leaves my family member not knowing how to respond. This was never reported to any authority.

When my daughter and I walked in campus, a student (presumably) cursed us with racial slurs in front of my daughter.

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.
We need a secure, open, and supportive environment for science.

The fears of researchers are grounded in federal policy, and in the university response.
### Federal law enforcement, federal agency, and university inquiries (32 individuals)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questioned by university administrators (VP for research, deans, chairs)</th>
<th>Questioned by federal law enforcement</th>
<th>Questioned by funding agencies</th>
<th>Total inquiries</th>
<th>Total responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>34</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>295</td>
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91% of those facing questions were not informed of their rights or responsibilities.
28% have considered avoiding federal grant applications. 48% feel they have no choice but to apply.
81% of researchers know WHERE they should disclose COI to universities

Only 29% know what should be disclosed to universities

Only 36% know what should be disclosed to federal funding agencies

- “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”
40 percent fear university will not support Asian American faculty, staff, or students if targeted by the U.S. government.
We need a secure, open, and supportive environment for science.

“Brain drain” is a serious potential consequence.
32% have thought about leaving the U.S. for another country.
31% have students/postdocs who turned down U.S.-based offers because the U.S. is no longer welcoming.
77% believed their university encouraged collaborations in China before 2018. Only 9% do now.
72% are worried about traveling to and/or bringing students to China (post-pandemic).
93% want universities to **collectively and publicly** raise concerns about ethnic profiling.
We need a secure, open, and supportive environment for science.

- Academic researchers should not be fearful of doing their jobs.
- The federal government and universities should foster research, not condemn it.
- The United States attracts the best talent from around the world. Let’s keep it that way.
Thank you for your attention!