

From: **Office of the President** <president@umd.edu>

Date: Thu, May 30, 2019, 5:11 PM

Subject: UMD's commitment to international collaborations and the international community on campus

May 30, 2019

Dear University of Maryland community,

Our campus and peer institutions are feeling the effects of growing tensions between the U.S. and China. Chinese, and Chinese-American faculty, students, visitors, and staff are feeling rising unease about their status and sense of belonging in America.

Open and free inquiry, and academic collaborations with universities from around the world are central to our institutional mission. This includes collaborations with institutions in China. The University of Maryland has established many academic exchanges and developed historical bonds of friendship with them. One of the symbols of the normalization of U.S.-China relations some forty years ago took place on our campus in Cole Fieldhouse, the so-called "ping-pong diplomacy" matches between the U.S. and China's national teams.

Since then, China has transformed itself into the second largest economy in the world. Amid rising geo-political, economic, and cultural tensions between our countries, there is U.S. concern about China's multi-faceted efforts at influence-seeking. About a year ago, a senior Federal law enforcement official testified before Congress that persons of Chinese descent represent a "whole of society" threat to America. In academic, scientific, and governmental organizations, they are increasingly subject to generalized suspicion and greater scrutiny.

I write to reaffirm the University of Maryland's commitment to international collaborations and support for all faculty, students, visiting scholars, and staff on our campus from all countries, including China. American research universities, a landmark of American civilization, have thrived because of our core values of openness, academic freedom, and inclusiveness. Our universities draw talent from all over the world. In the U.S., the majority of PhDs in STEM fields are awarded to international students, many of whom eventually become U.S. residents and citizens.

We must remain true to these core academic values. At the same time, as American institutions, we also need greater awareness and vigilance to confront undue foreign influence, which rises to the level of foreign interference.

The Association of American Universities and the American Public and Land Grant Universities have identified practices of universities that can help ensure the security of

research, protect against intellectual property theft and academic espionage, and prevent foreign infringement on values of free speech and scientific integrity. The American Council of Education has also compiled best practices.

I have asked our Vice President for Research, Laurie Locascio, to form and lead a campus group to consider implementing these practices on our campus, as appropriate. They may include, for example, expanding campus awareness of foreign interference; enhancing the training of faculty, researchers, and graduate students on foreign export controls and reporting requirements; reviewing foreign gifts and grants; reviewing foreign conflicts of interest; strengthening data security, cybersecurity, and research security; and safeguarding information in foreign travels.

I urge our campus to stay in touch with Laurie about any individual issues as they arise so that she and her staff can work with you to resolve them.

The U.S.-China bilateral relationship is of global and strategic importance. Today, it is increasingly fraught and competitive. The challenge of U.S. research universities, including the University of Maryland, is to safeguard our academic values and our nation's legitimate interests. At stake are American leadership in education, research, and innovation in the 21st century and the resilience of our democracy.

Sincerely,

Wallace D. Loh
President, University of Maryland