

# Report on Research Compliance Volume 16, Number 1. January 31, 2019

## Steps for Institutions to Combat Foreign Influences in Research

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The idea that a researcher would steal information from his or her lab and colleagues is awful enough. But if that data were to head outside the United States and into the hands of a foreign government—now that is the stuff of nightmares.

Yet, it's even worse, as the nightmare has become reality for some. At a meeting of the NIH Advisory Committee to the Director (ACD) in mid-December, M. Roy Wilson, president of Wayne State University, revealed his school had fallen victim to a scheme perpetrated by a principal investigator (PI) who took data back to her "shadow lab" in China during trips she claimed were for the purpose of helping a family member. This was not an isolated incident, Wilson said, as similar occurrences are happening at other institutions that have not publicly disclosed them.

Wilson described the situation as he unveiled a series of recommendations from an ACD working group he co-chaired. The ACD endorsed the recommendations, which addressed steps that NIH should take as well as related and separate actions directed at institutions—all with the aim of thwarting theft of research data, intellectual property, applications submitted for peer review and incidents of non-disclosure of support by foreign entities.

Needed efforts on the part of both NIH and institutions include raising awareness, tightening requirements, closer monitoring and imposing consequences when rules and policies are broken (see story, p. 1). At some point, the recommendations to NIH could turn into new requirements on the part of awardee institutions, but Wilson and others are urging organizations to take action on their own now.

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