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### JASON Report Suggests Integrity Framework Against Foreign Concerns

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As the National Science Foundation does its part to ensure that agency-funded research is free from inappropriate interference by foreign entities, it will do so armed with a report that “emphasized to us, number one, the need to maintain openness and the definition of fundamental research,” said Rebecca Keiser, head of NSF’s Office of International Science and Engineering.

Titled “Fundamental Research Security,” the report<sup>[1]</sup> also “emphasize[s] that, indeed, there is a problem from a small number of nations and that this problem is often in the area of breaches to research integrity,” she added during a Dec. 11 call with the media to discuss findings by the independent science advisory group known as JASON.

Broadly, the report concludes that “the problem of foreign influence can be met by a combination of more robust research integrity measures, careful consideration of risks before entering into foreign engagements and better information exchange between the [intelligence community], law enforcement, and academia—all of which are good in any circumstance. We note in particular that expanded expectations with respect to reporting conflicts and commitments would have the strong benefit of making the academic system fairer for all.”

Keiser noted that NSF is “very pleased that the report emphasized the need for the international nature of research and for the diversity of researchers’ countries.”

Although details are yet to be worked out, among the changes NSF-supported principal investigators (PIs) and institutions (and agency staff and temporary employees) are likely to see as a result of NSF’s efforts to thwart troublesome or illegal influences by foreign entities are more training, more disclosure requirements (likely to go beyond financial conflicts of interest), and better coordination among federal agencies, said Keiser and Jim Ulvestad, NSF’s chief officer for research facilities, who joined her on the call.

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